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ESSAY on the RISE and PROGRESS of RHIME by THEOPHILUS  
SWIFT, ESQ. To which was adjudged the Gold Prize Medal, pro-  
posed by the Royal Irish Academy, for the best Essay on that Subject.—  
Read Nov. 9th, 1801.

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“ JUVAT INTEGROS ACCEDERE FONTES.”

LUCK.

IF it be of importance to the interests of letters, that the æra has been ascertained when the compositions of the Greeks first abandoned rhythm, and assumed the form called afterward in their own language *πεζος λογος*, *oratio soluta*; the tracing to its source that branch of the poetic art, distinguished by the name of *rhime*, will be found an object not unworthy of learned curiosity; and the discussion, perhaps, may be productive of some collateral observations not unprofitable to the cause of philology in general.

It may be said, (for what silly argument hath not been urged in every age by the idle and illiterate?) that *verbal* investigations, such as the present, are attended with no solid advantage, are too inconsiderable for popular regard, and too remote from general utility. It is answered, that the most important disquisitions are often the most uninteresting to the multitude; but, for that very reason, become the more valuable to the few for whom they were intended. To underrate a subject, because it happens not to fall in with our own particular studies or pursuits, is the sure sign of a narrow and prejudiced mind. Poetry employs a language of her own, and addresses not herself to the vulgar: through her, every grace of literature, every intelligence of science, comes to us recommended, embellished, illumined: and this academy, when it directed the present enquiry, sacrificed at her shrine, and added another leaf to her laurel.

A celebrated writer has observed, that “ the value of several circumstances in story, lessens very much by distance of time, though some “ minute circumstances are very valuable.” The observation is just ; and as applied to the work of another author I am going to name, will be found to have its due weight. Aristotle in his Poetics hath left us the origin, progress, and perfection of tragedy. The value of ancient tragedy, in the present improved state of the drama, has certainly “ lessened much by distance of time ;” yet “ some minute circumstances that affect it, are very valuable.” As the Greek drama was but the skeleton of that which latter times have filled up, giving muscle, and sinews, and flesh, and heart, and pulse, and motion to the lifeless representation of man ; so there are some circumstances attending ancient tragedy, still more valuable than the thing itself. The philosopher’s pen, dipped in the fountain of an immortal language, preserves to us a treasure, rendered less venerable by time, than valuable for the incidents connected with it. Embalmed in its own excellence, the work has outlived the “ perfection,” and the wreck too, of its subject. But although the present question should lead to enquiries not less interesting to the cause of letters, neither the perishable language the author writes in, nor his skill in the management of his unfruitful materials, afford him the least hope of amusing the present age, or informing posterity. Yet the learning and the judgment of the philosopher had been lost in the maze of the proposed enquiry, where antiquity shrinks back into her cell, and refuses to be dragged out by the strong hand. The origin of rhyme, however, far more ancient than that of tragedy in Greece, though sometimes perhaps attempted, remains yet to be explored : its approach is tangled with errors, where obstacles rise with perseverance, and labour is rewarded with increasing difficulties. Hid in the recesses of age, it eludes enquiry ; and like the great river of Ægypt, *not to be traced upward*, is to be found more by good fortune than painful indagation.

It has long been my opinion, and the more I have lately considered the subject, the less I have found reason to change it, that rhyme hath  
its

its origin in no exclusive language, but is original in all those, where it hath at any time prevailed. To find therefore the origin of rhyme, we must seek it in the origin of language itself.

Let us try it by this touchstone. If we repair to the most ancient of all languages, and fountain of every other, \* *the Hebrew*, shall we find it there? That question shall be answered presently. In the mean while I observe, that every language hath a genius peculiar to itself, and rhyme may not be that of the Hebrew. Written with an iron quill, musical inflexion † is almost a stranger to it: prosody it may indeed possess, for every language hath its own laws. But harsh, guttural, and unyielding, its rustic simplicity admits no transpositives, the very soul of numbers and character of an animated muse. Sublime and affecting as the Hebrew poetry undoubtedly is beyond all others, it is rather the inartificial burst of laud and magnification, than the strain or effect of regulated composition. It has more of the mountain storm than the murmur of the grove, the roar of the broken torrent than the music of the flowing stream, yet when the evil spirit was upon Saul, the soft melody of the harp calmed the passions of the king. In the language of Longinus, it contains that ponderous enthusiasm which is

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\* Vid. Strabo. Geog. Lib. 1. Where this well-informed writer says, that the Armenians, Syrians, and Arabians are homophylous, as appears by their LANGUAGE, *κατα την διαλεκτον*; which, he adds, shews that Mesopotamia is the common parent of the three: *δηλοι δη Μεσοποταμια εκ των τριων συνησσαι εθνων*: idque ostendit Mesopotamia ex tribus hisce conflata populis. See the very learned Schikard's Horol. Hebraic. and the Phaleg of Bochart, with Vitringer's Orig. Sac. *passim*. In Lib. 1. Cap. 3. this last admirable writer expressly says, "Cum unâ eâdemque linguâ omnes orientis populos diu post extructionem civitatis Babylonix usos esse probavimus, haud obscurè indicavimus, credere nos, illam linguam (scil. Ægyptiacam) fuisse vel Hebræam vel Hebraeæ simillimam: adeo ut simul nobis incumbat necessitas ostendendi linguas omnes ceteras ab Hebræâ paulatim deflexisse; atque hinc præstantissimorum cujusvis generis et linguæ vocabulorum apud gentem sacram reperiri origines."

† There are in the Hebrew thirteen accentual notes for the lowering and elevation of the voice in singing and recitation, which are called *Ionics*.

one source of the sublime, “το σφοδρον και ενθουσιαστικον παθος.” Few in its radicals, incopious of derivatives, it owes more to the inspiration of HIM that gave it birth, than to its own fecundity. Yet, that I may not seem to undervalue its excellence, I hold it the first of all languages, and, from the words that are to be continued in heaven, presume it will be the *last* and the *eternal*, I respect, because it is the *sacred language*, the same in which Moses wrote his laws, the same that the prophets spake, and above all, the same that Christ, who was the light, and the wisdom of the Father, employed to manifest the divine will, and preach redemption to mankind. On these accounts I revere it: and, sure, of divine authority must be that language, whose power gave speech to the dumb, and made even the deaf to hear! Added to this, we have Christ’s own command to “search the scriptures,” which we cannot thoroughly do, except in their original language, the very circumstance that consecrates its character, as if Providence had rendered it unfamiliar, to excite our enquiries, and sanctify it to himself. Perhaps no stronger proof can be brought of its divine original, than its disdain of artificial aid, and its ability to sustain its importance under difficulties that would have crushed a language less divine.

Sunt paucae voces, has unus devorat annus;  
In reliquis Babylon cernitur, atque chaos.

Unyielding to the profane touch of heathen Pantheonism, Apollo and his nine harmonious maids have no acquaintance with it. What Donatus said of the poet Virgil, may with little alteration be applied here; had he been doomed to write his *Æneis* in Hebrew, he would have performed it with no better success, than if he had attempted it in High-Dutch. The Hebrew prælections, indeed, by the very learned and amiable Lowth, have detected a few dactyles and spondees in the psalms, and perhaps in one or two other places of the sacred writings: but while the discovery was not wholly new, accident more than

than selection or judgment seems to have given them birth: yet of the fact itself, even as stated by the author of the *Brevis Confutatio*, there does not, I apprehend, appear sufficient certainty. The *learned Bishop of Chichester* stands in direct opposition to the *learned Bishop of London*; the one affirming in his *Prolegomena in Psalmos*, “quantitatis syllabarum nulla ratio habetur;” the other, in his *Brevis Confutatio*, as roundly asserting, “quantitatis syllabarum *semper* habetur ratio.”

Who shall decide when doctors disagree?\*

But supposing the point sufficiently established, the detection itself demonstrates the singularity, as if it had said in the very language of the scriptures, “hitherto shalt thou go, and no further”. These observations will presently assist us in shewing how it came to pass that the Greek and Roman languages were unfavorable to rhyme. And this part of the subject has been the longer insisted on, because it is the foundation on which the whole of the argument must stand or fall.

It will not, I presume, be necessary to trace the decay and declension of the sacred language through its various stages of corruption, from the dispersion of tongues to the long and bitter bondage of the Israelites in Ægypt, where their language must have undergone a severe and lamentable change: “cum fortunis gentium mutari quoque sermonem”: *Voss. de vir. Ryth.* Nor from thence to pursue it through all their gross idolatries, which permute a language more perhaps than bondage itself, to the Babylonish captivity, when “haud dubium quin lingua hæc multum “pristini splendoris amiserit, atque Chaldæa vocabula plurima irrepperint”, *bitringa lib. 1. cap. 3.* Nor from thence to deduce it to the invasion of Antiochus Epiphanes, when both the language and the country itself suffered so total an alteration, as to render them altogether Syrian. Though something not unforeign to our purpose might perhaps be gathered from the poetry of the Hebrews during these periods of revolution, the investigation would both detain the academy too long, and appear

\* Vide Append. Numb. 1.

pear the less necessary when we come to consider certain pieces of the Hebrew verse. It might be more to our purpose, though at first sight perhaps not so obvious, to trace the language from the time it ceased to be *vocal*, and became as it were a dead-letter; that is, from the time of Esdras to the period of the incarnation, a space that included some hundreds of years; and so subversive of the tongue, that during the sway of the Seleucidæ, Judæa nearly lost her original language, speaking a sort of Syro-Greek, known by the name of the *language of Jerusalem*. But even this, as well because the learned do not require such discussion, as for the reasons just assigned, will also be found unnecessary; notwithstanding the silence of the vowels must have greatly contributed, not only to embarrass the sense of many passages in the sacred page, but to render it at once uncertain and capricious, I had almost said, absonous and dumb\*, not more destructive to legitimate measure†, than to the happiness of the rhyme, should it be made appear that rhyme is the character of the Hebrew poetry. The learned Vossius indeed, rashly it may be thought, would cut the matter short with one sweeping stroke of his pen, observing, “Hebræorum qualis fuerit poësis, adeo nobis ignotum, quam quod ignotissimum: nam quæcunque de hâc scripsere nonnulli istiusmodi sunt, ut longè melius fuisset ea tacuisse,” *Voss. de Vir. Cant. &c.*

Notwithstanding

\* The vowels, it is justly observed by Vossius, strongly express the manners and character of every nation, which he beautifully illustrates in the example of the Greek vowels: “Percurremus potestatem et efficaciam, quam vocales habeant in significandis moribus et gentis cujusque ingenio.” *Voss. de viribus Cant. et Ryth.*

† The language of the Poles, though scarcely possessing a vowel, and in this respect not much differing from the Hébrew, the natives thought well enough adapted to verse. “Polonum lingua ferream propamodum habet duritiem, utpote in qua uni vocali septem vel octo sæpe copulantur consonantes. Pene dixeris eos absque vocalibus loqui. Memini certè vidisse me aliquem ex ea gente, qui palam jactaret ad formandam vocem et explicandos animi sensus, vel solas sibi consonantes sufficere literas. Qui Polonice callent, facilitè et horum sermonem ad pedes et tempora syllabica poterunt revocare, cum nulla usquam sit lingua numerorum expers.” *Voss. ibid.* Withdraw the masoretic vowels, and I much question whether a modern rabbi could perform as much in his own tongue.

Notwithstanding the great authorities that oppose the question of rhyme as constituting a part of the Hebrew poetry, what I have read on the subject, with my own slender knowledge of the sacred text, inclines me to think this ancient parent of tongues and *magna mater* of language, who has given birth to so many fairer daughters, nursed in her fruitful bosom the very soul of rhyme; and that rhyme formed a strong feature in her venerable face. The question then, as it effects the present enquiry, appears to be this: not, simply, whether rhyme did, or did not enter, and form a part of the Hebrew verse? (for that is a matter of proof, not of speculation.) But, *whether rhyme was an innate quality in the parent language?* Those, we know, who are born with the music of poetry in their souls, “lisp in numbers”. We require not the tuneful Ovid or the melodious Pope to assure us of the fact. Filled with the divine enthusiasm, the infant poet labours, like the Delphic virgin, till his words break into the harmony of numbers: and a judicious critic, who cannot be suspected of partiality in this matter, has confirmed its truth in an elaborate treatise on rhythmical composition. So natural, says he, is the rhyme in all languages, that infants of their own accord fall into it, by sounding batologically the same words of a song, and afterwards by varying them into similar corresponding sounds\*. This sure had been enough to convince us, that rhyme is coeval with language, and ancient as speech itself. If so, it cannot be a *borrowed* quality in poetry; neither can it be of European invention, or have been first brought by the Barbarians of the north into the more southern provinces. It is the object of these pages to shew that rhyme has in no age or country been super-induced into any language whatever, and least of all, into our own, that

“Slides into verse, and hitches in a rhyme”

It is the child of nature, not of adoption; the spontaneous language, speaking through the mouths of babes and sucklings, and as Vossius says of the infant poet, consulting the “ornament as well as the fullness of

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numbers.”

\* Voss. *ibid.*

numbers." "Hac ratione non ornatui tantum, sed et verborum confutitur copiae," (*De Vir. Cant.*). In which fulness the language of every nation, whereof we have any knowledge, delights to express itself, before it loses its character, and ambles into prose. If, then, the parent poetry, which is only the parent language of mankind, diversified and branched out into an infinity of channels, *does* court and acknowledge the rhyme, to that fountain, and that fountain alone, must we resort for its *origin*; though we cannot, for that very reason, thence deduce its progress, without deducing, at the same time, the progress of language with it; a subject for which this essay is not designed. And thus we may conclude, that what the fountain possesses, the stream inherits; and like the river of the poet, shall continue to flow as eternally as language itself; that universal voice of nature, varied by certain local habits and circumstances, yet always the same; resembling the copious and abundant Nile, that slender at its source, but winding into innumerable mazes, and enriched in its progress with tributary rivers, is still the Nile; till through its numerous mouths it discharges its agglomerated waters into the immensity of ocean.

Neither will this be found to militate against the argument, that the Greeks and the Romans excluded rhyme from their poetry: it only proves that dactyles and spondees, with their complex varieties of long and short feet, did not *easily* admit the rhyme; and that transposition does not favor the teleutic harmony: for the same reason, that other languages, not admitting the Greek and Roman quantities, receive the rhyme with ease, and make it a part of their poetry. Yet, we shall presently see, in the example of Theocritus, that where the *Νυνιον*, or *nenia*, provoked it, that is, where nature invited, and called for it, (such as hath been observed in the case of infants that lisp the rhyme, and in the *la la* songs noticed by Lucian, *λαλα παιδικον επιθεγμα*, *Philopseud.*) even the Greek itself could steal it upon the ear. We shall hear the Grecian nurse most musically soothing her little children with its harmony; not perhaps using the direct *ὁμοιοτελευτον* but yet the *ὁμοιοπρωτον*; which, the cadence considered, amounts to the same thing, and produces the same happy effect.

And

And so true are these observations, for it is to nature we must trace this universal harmony, that the most unpolished nations of the world, as well as the most civilized, adopt the rhyme as a constituent part of their poetry: for every nation hath its poetry and its rhythm, from the war-song to the amatory ode: and without this rhythm, it would cease to be poetry. “Tollas compositionem et partium varietatem, simul quoque tollas pulchritudinem: tollas rhythmum, fracta et sine viribus erit oratio.” *Vossius*. Most of the American tribes, of which we have any knowledge, make the rhyme an essential part in their songs: though Father Lafitau (*Mœurs des Sauvages*, Tom. 2.) says that the rhyme or telcutic music does not enter the rhythm of the Hurons and Troquois. But though I would not argue, *a posse, ad esse*, I think it highly probable, the learned father might have been mistaken, through his want of a thorough and perfect acquaintance with the language of these Savages; the polished European ear not always being able to distinguish, *ακριβως*, the just pronunciation of a barbarous tongue; and still less, to fix the corresponding sounds in their proper places. And this observation is strengthened by Mr. Carver, who, after premising, that “as the Indians are not acquainted with letters, it is very “difficult to convey with precision *the exact sound of their words*,” gives us one of the hunting songs of the *Naudowessies*, a tribe closely bordering on the Hurons, and which, speaking a language used on solemn occasions by the Hurons and Troquois themselves, viz. the *Chipéway*, do rhyme their verse. The writer then gives us this song:

“Meoh accoowah eshtaw paatah negushtarvgaw shejah menah. Tongo wakon meoh  
“washta, paatah acboowah. Hopiniyahie oweeh accooyee meoh, washta patah otoh to-  
“hinjoh meoh teebee.”

Though Mr. Carver has not noted the rhymes, the academy cannot fail to observe them, notwithstanding the frequent recurrence of the same or similar sounds, may not allow us Europeans to determine their specific places. Which is thus translated, as literally as the genius of the two languages will admit.

## 1.

Ere the rising sun beams break,  
 I the lofty mountain seek;  
 Watch the new light's earliest ray,  
 Chafing the dark clouds away.

## 2.

Spirit hear! When comes the night,  
 Silver moon, oh lend thy light!  
 To my tent oh speed my way,  
 Laden with the hunter's prey!

Even in the liquid and melodious Italian, a language as smooth and musical as the Huronic is harsh and rugged, Le Clerc shews us, by throwing the verse into the order of prose, you shall not be able to detect the rhyme. And this argument we shall presently see applies yet more strongly to the parent poetry, that has been silent above two thousand years, “*ab annis plus bis mille intermortua*,” as Lowth has it; and whose true enunciation the seventy themselves had lost, three hundred years before the coming of the Messiah. Who then shall restrain the instability of language, who shall arrest its fugaciousness? Who, that considers the uncertainty of all human things, never at a stay, expects, that words shall be exempted from the general lot? Shall words be less fleeting than the things they represent, and of which they are but the sign? Their mutations shall be various as the changes of other mortal things: and the vowels, or tones of language, shall in their very nature be the first to depart. The seventy, learned as they were, and selected, for their superior erudition and judgment, have fallen into the common errors of humanity. The very mode, that was prescribed to ensure their accuracy, proved the source of their *inaccuracies*: for, being chosen out of the several tribes, each differing from its neighbour tribe in its respective pronunciation of the vowels, or elements of the language, they have more than once jostled one another: each tribe, by enunciating the vowels in its own way, and according to its own dialect, (for although the Chaldee was but a dialect

dialect or daughter of the Hebrew, yet, that dialect was now itself corrupted, and variously spoken) one, after the manner of Galilee, another, after that of Antioch, a third of Jerusalem, and so on, has sometimes given a turn to the original words that the text would not allow. In fact, since it is observed, that nothing is more fleeting or inconstant than the *sound* of a LIVING language, especially after it hath acquired a mixture with other nations, that commerce, invasion, or migration itself, may have produced; by what standard shall we determine the exact and faithful pronunciation of a DEAD one, especially that of its *vowels*, its airy and elemental part? These observations will be found the more necessary, when we come to the examples Le Clerc has given us of the Hebrew poetry, of whose rhyme, though for the reasons assigned it may not *always* be possible to trace or fix it, I am as firmly persuaded, as I am of the rhimes of Dryden.

Captain Cook, or, rather, the more discriminating Dr. Hawksworth for him, has made an observation on the Otahitean poetry, that comes directly to our purpose; and though I had designed it for another place, I cannot better introduce it than in this; especially, as it proves the point, which these papers have principally in view; viz. that savage poetry, which is but another word for *the language of nature*, hath its rhyme, as well as the courtly and artificial numbers of polished society; and that modern Europe just as much borrowed its rhyme from the islands of the Pacific Ocean, as from the shores of the Baltic. “They call every two  
“ verses, or couplet in a song, *pebay*; they are generally, though not al-  
“ ways, in RHIME; and when pronounced by the natives, we could discover  
“ that they were metre. Mr. Banks took great pains, to write down some  
“ of them which were made upon our arrival, as nearly as he could ex-  
“ press their sounds by combinations of our letters; but when we read  
“ them, *not having their accent*, we could scarcely make them either metre  
“ or rhyme. The reader will easily perceive they were of very different  
“ structure.

Tede

Tede Pahai de parow-a  
Ha maru no mina.

E pahah Tayo malama tai ya  
No Tebane tonaton whannomy ya.

E Turai eat terara patee whennua toai  
Ino o maio Pretane to whennuaia no tute."

*Cooke's Voyages.*

These couplets are undoubtedly rhythm; though like the Hebrew, we can neither measure their quantities, nor give them their proper cadence. We are obliged, however, to Mr. Banks for his care and accuracy, in preserving the rhimes: but, I cannot help being of opinion, that the same fate, which attended Lafitau, attended this gentleman when he put down the last *pebay*, that presents us, *as he has written it*, with two blank lines. Diffonant and unfamiliar as the Otaheitean verse must have been to his ear, it is more than probable he was unable to catch or follow its rhyme. Yet he enjoyed one advantage, that no Hebrew scholar can again obtain. Mr. Banks had the *natives themselves, and authors of their own poetry, to pronounce and repeat the pebays, till he should understand them*, at least sufficiently to pen them according to his own ear. And yet, he might have no better fortune than other travellers, who, with the very same disposition to accuracy, differ almost always in their pronunciation of the same words; those travellers especially who visit Arabia, the tribes of which nation are at as perpetual variance in their dialects, as themselves are in unceasing motion: and perhaps it were as easy to preserve the form of their letters committed to their own sands, as to retain their sounds among such a floating multitude. Hence it has happened, that the Arabian traveller hath not always been able to convey with due precision the legitimate sound of the word he would write down for European use; particularly the *vocal* words, or those in which the vowels predominate. The instances are innumerable. But if with such peculiar advantages, Mr. Banks found himself unequal to communicate the just metre of the Otaheitean poetry, by what rule or standard

standard shall the most able Hebreologist determine that of a silent and unvowelled language, a body without a soul?\* a lost and uncharacterised tongue! for the poetry of a modern rabbi just as much resembles that of the sacred pen-men, as the Cambridge fiddle of Joshua Barnes resembles the lyre of Anacreon.† Much praise, however, is due to those pious and learned men, both the Jewish and the Christian doctors, who have laboured in the thorny vineyard, and cleared away any part of the brambles that perplexed its poetry.

On the rhymes, contained in the last quotation from Captain Cook, I would offer one or two short observations. In the second couplet we have the word *ya* repeated as a rhyme; whereas to an occidental ear the combination of the letters presents but one sound, and that the same. The rhyme therefore to us Europeans appears not *homoioteleutic* but *homoteleutic*. It does not however follow, that the natives, who speak the language, do not accent or pronounce the word differently from what we do: and consequently, the last couplet in which the rhyme is not obvious to us, may yet be *homoioteleutic*. And the same argument addresses itself to the Hebrew poetry, about whose cadence and structure we know so little. This observation receives new strength from the remarks of Fathers Magaillan and Kircher on the Chinese language, viz. that the same word, by a change of tone and aspiration shall signify from fifteen to twenty different things; the first instances the word *po*, which he shews by certain marks has no less than eleven various meanings; and the latter has these words, “*hæc dictio* “*monosyllaba ya, ex se indifferens est, sed pro diversitate vocalium quibus designatur, differentes significationes exprimit, uti sequitur.*

*Ya*

\* “No single letter,” says Simeon Ben Jochaï, in his *Zohar*, as I find it translated, “hath power to signify one thing more than another, without the points; and all the letters without the points, are a *body without a soul*. With the points, the body stands.”

† When Barnes published his Philautic edition of Anacreon, the Cambridge wits said, that it was not Joshua Barnes's edition of Anacreon, but Anacreon's edition of Joshua Barnes.

" <i>ŷá</i> . . . .	Deus.
" <i>ŷǎ</i> . . . .	Mutus.
" <i>ŷà</i> . . . .	Excellens.
" <i>ŷá</i> . . . .	Stupor.
" <i>ŷǎ</i> . . . .	Anser.

*China Illustrata, Pars prim. Cap. tert.*

To this list Mr. Ogilby adds half-a-dozen other meanings of the word *ya*, according to its accentuation, but which none except a native can properly pronounce.\* Nor is it foreign to our purpose to take notice, that Father Magaillan, who resided five-and-twenty years in the country, and received the applause of the Chinese themselves for his compositions in their tongue, has observed that the Chinese language is the most facile and accommodating of any in the known world, the Greek itself not having surpassed it in copiousness and variety, in perspicuity or in sweetness, and though consisting of between five or six thousand letters, yet possessing no more than three hundred and twenty words, all monosyllables; but these by artificial combinations and accents so modified and varied, as to form the most luxuriant and eloquent harmony. This peculiar genius of the language admirably fits it both for poetry and for rhyme, the *decus et tutamen* of numbers; and accordingly we shall presently see that the rhyme invariably prevails in the Chinese poetry. Those languages too, which abound in monosyllables, are observed to rhyme with the most ease; a remark so obvious as scarce to deserve notice. This monosyllabic quality in the Hebrew may however have been one of the principal causes why rhyme took such strong possession of its poetry, and continues to characterize most of the English, with the whole of the Gallic verse, and more or less the entire poetry of Europe.

Though

\* Father Le Compte, in his letter from China to the Archbishop of Rheims, observes, that if you do not take care, you may call a man a *beast*, when you intended to say *Sir*.

Though many learned rabbies had endeavoured to preserve or illustrate the sacred text, while the Christian church slept in sinful and slothful ignorance, yet it was not till about the fifteenth century, that the Hebrew became an object of classical regard: soon after this period we find Abarbanel, the learned jew, better known by the name of Abrabanel, or Abravanel, writing his dissertation on the minor prophets; a work which I have not seen, but in which, it seems, the author lays down *rhime* as a principle, or primary canon of Hebraic poetry. Previous to Abarbanel, I do not know of any writer who has noticed the rhimes of the sacred text; although the rhimes of his brother rabbies, who learned theirs of the Arabians, are sufficiently numerous. Indeed, Le Clerc himself, whose learning and observation scarcely any thing escaped, does not seem to have been conscious that Abarbanel had ever written a word on the subject; not so much as naming him, he only observes generally that later critics, such as Buxtorff, the father, in his *Profodia*, and Theodore Herbert in his *de Poetica Hebraicâ*, and Ferrand, in his *Commentary on the Psalms*, with some, perhaps, of less note, had here and there discovered rhimes in the Hebrew poetry, and slightly mentioned them, but that they had all imputed them to *accident*: this, therefore, being pretty much the case, we must not be surprized to find the learned Dr. Lowth, and other Hebrew scholars, opposing the *new* doctrine, as a sort of poetic heresy, whose very novelty had been sufficient to provoke the thunders of orthodoxy. Of Abarbanel's dissertation, however, the doctor thus delivers himself, "ABARBANEL tres statuit species canticorum. Prima est "rythmica, five *ομοιοτελευτικοις* constans; id usu apud recentiores Hebræos, "qui ab Arabibus didicerunt, sed sacris scriptoribus planè ignota." (*Præl.* 18. in *Annot.*) Abarbanel, then, for ought that appears to the contrary, was the first that had noted the rhimes of the Hebrew poetry: and it is somewhat extraordinary, that he, Le Clerc, Garofalo, Fourmont, and other learned champions, should discover in it what we are as positively assured is not there to be found: and just as extraordinary, that if the Rhimes are there

to be seen, that neither the sharp-sighted Lowth, nor the acute Calmet, nor the profound Pfalmanaazar, nor the judicious Bedford, with other distinguished Hebrew scholars, should be able to perceive them. One would suppose that something divine indeed and sacred, had been lodged in the tongue, whose mysteries may not be unlocked; that like the tables of testimony, it had literally been written "*with the finger of God.*" (Exod. c. 31.) or as Fleury, in his *Mœurs des Israelites* has sublimely expressed it, that the Hebrew poetry was the language of spirits, who stand not in need of words to communicate their ideas. (Chap. 20.)

When I observed that the rabbies had learned their rhimes of the Arabians, it was in pursuance with the words of Dr. Lowth, cited above: but while Le Clerk, from whom the doctor borrowed the observation, has ascribed them also to the same source, Vitringa has proved beyond, all contradiction, that the Arabians originally spoke the Hebrew; and thus, instead of referring the rabbinical rhimes to the Arabian poetry, they might, with as little difficulty, have been traced to another fountain. The Arabian, says Vitringa, is but a dialect of the Hebrew; "*Dialectum Arabicum adeo tum temporis (scil. Jobi) non distulisse á Ebreâ.*" (*Vitr. obs. sacr.*) and Lowth himself has said, in express terms, "*omnes Abrahami posteros, Israelitas, Idumæos, Arabas, tum Keturæos, tum Ishmaelitas, communi linguâ diu usos fuisse veri est simillimum.*" (Præl. 32.) But the Doctor's argument, that, because the rabbinical rhimes are, as he tells us, borrowed from the Arabians, rhyme, therefore, cannot enter the sacred text, (for if his words have not that meaning, they have no meaning at all) is to me no more conclusive, than if the same argument had been employed to prove that these rhimes had arisen out of the *ομοιοτελευτα* of the second psalm. The one, in my humble opinion, is just as conclusive as the other. When the rabbies began to write verse, they might find, without recurring to the Arabian poets, or the Hebrew bards, or even the christian monks themselves,

selves, as Scaliger supposes,\* that the monosyllabic character of their language challenged and facilitated the rhyme; and, to use an observation of Le Clerc, that the cases and suffix pronouns chiming so perpetually with one another, and the plurals again so constantly terminating and consoning alike, it was more difficult for them to *avoid* the rhyme than to *find* it. Yet, it is somewhat singular, that the learned Pfalmanaazar, a man eminently skilled in oriental literature, should borrow this very argument of Le Clerc, and employ it against him, with a view to show that the sacred writers did *not* compose their poems in rhyme. His words are these: "Those that are ever so little acquainted with the Hebrew grammar know, that the termination of verbs, and even of nouns in the plural, and the junction of the possessive pronouns to both of them, are so alike and uniform, that it would be vastly more difficult to write a poem in blank verse in that tongue, than to have it all in rhyme." (*Hist. of the Jews to the Babyl. Captiv.*) From these premises, then, I should suppose it was not of the Arabians that the rabbies had learned their teleuties; and I lay it down, as a rule not to be departed from, that rhyme is not a *borrowed* character in poetry; notwithstanding the monks, who found pleasure in difficulty, might have forced it for a time upon the Latin, to shew what the forbidding genius of an obstinate and unaccommodating tongue could perform: a tongue so unmanageable, even in its most improved state, that Cicero himself complains of its inflexibilities.

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\* "Neque vero putaveris genus illud rythmi, quo Proverbia, et liber Job constant, esse simile ei quod hodie Judeis in usu est. Nam hodieci versus Judaici sunt planè rythmi nostri vulgares *ομοιοπρωτοι και ομοιοτελευτοι*: quod a nobis Christianis ante annos D, plus minus didicerunt, nos autem ex Leoninis Hexametris quæ vocant, eos effinximus." (Scal. Animad. in Chronol. Euseb. p. 7.) Yet, in the preceding page, the same Scaliger had said "Solum canticum Moïsis, extremo Deuteronomio, Proverbia Solomonis, et totus ferè liber Job, quadam rythmi necessitate cohibentur, qui rythmus est instar duarum Iambicarum, et *tinnulus accidit ad aures*." Scaliger, therefore, need not have sought the rhymes of the rabbies in Christian convents, nor should Le Clerc have asserted that Scaliger had said nothing concerning the ancient Hebrew rhymes.

This however shews only the sport of cloistered dullness, possessing no better refuge from unbroken apathy; the gambols of a dormouse catching at its own tail, and for the same reason, the rhyme being abhorrent to the Roman language, (as the monkish latin itself proves it to have been,) it fell into disesteem and disuse, the very moment that taste and corrected judgment had shewn that the structure of the language resisted the rhyme, and wrestled with it as unnatural; while the rhyme as naturally formed a part of, and still continues to hold its place in, those languages, which grew out of the *corrupted* Latin, that solicited the rhyme, for the same reason the *pure* Latin refused to receive it, all which languages formed themselves pretty much about the same time: for with the loss of Roman liberty, and the consequent fall of that mighty empire, fell its *language*, giving birth to new tongues, like those of the confusion, that gradually settled in distinct *dialects*. Nor was it long before these tongues molded themselves into rhyme, as if by common consent, not borrowing it of the Goths, as some have supposed, and adopting it, as of violence, after the manner of the monks, but *yielding to it, as of necessity*, some sooner and others later, according to the degree of inversion and the transpositive turn, that each language happened to take; that is, as each respective tongue partook more or less of the genius and conformation of the Latin: and this is strongly exemplified in the modern French, whose construction, while it abounds in words formed from the Latin, resembles the Hebrew more perhaps than any other language, the words following one another in the same temperate and natural order. Hence it happens, its transpositives being but few or none, the language not only receives the rhyme with ease, but in most cases *requires* it: for, excepting those of Ronfard about the middle of the sixteenth century, and some few others his contemporaries of less note, whose poetry has deservedly been rejected for its hypallages and other affected Latinisms, the whole of the French poetry is of the simplest construction; and from the time of Marot, a period that embraces nearly three hundred years,

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it has been improving, in all the modest graces of the most elegant and harmonious rhimes. Infomuch, that blank verse may be said to be an entire stranger to the French poetry.\*

What has been stated will suffice for a short but general view of the progress of rhyme in Europe, where scarcely one nation took the lead of another; or if any, Italy perhaps the first, then, courtly and gallant France, after these Spain, England next, and Germany last: each constructing a language of its own, compounded of Roman and Septentrional phrase, that formed a kind of gotho-latinity; till learning, science, judgment, and above all *taſte*, had perfected the music of the European muse, and polished it into that sweetness and harmony, which it is hoped it will long retain. It is probable, therefore, I shall not dwell long on this part of the subject in the sequel: and, indeed, as rhyme, for the reasons assigned, almost at the same instant took possession of the European tongues, (of western Europe, I would say) and became as it were a part and member of their poetry, there will be the less occasion to pursue its “progress” through the mazes of the modern languages. The subject would require a little volume; and these papers have already swelled to an unexpected size. The period of the Troubadours alone would furnish a distinct essay.

As I propound the Hebrew to be the parent fountain of language, and assume its precedence in Rhime, it may be expected, I should prove a fact that has been so strenuously denied. Those who would have a complete view of the question, are referred to Le Clerc’s “*Essai de Critique, où l’on tâche de démonſtrer en quoi conſiſte le pœſie des Hebreux*”, published in the *Bibliothèque Univerſelle*, for the year 1688, Vol. 9. Art. 8. one of the most luminous and beautiful tracts, and at the same time the most conclusive, that has ever fallen within my knowledge. To establish the rhyme, the entire “*Essai*” should be transcribed, for every argument rises upon the other, with additional force and lustre, the whole forming a well-cemented building, that even prejudice has not been  
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\* See Append. Numb. 2.

able to destroy ; but the strength or beauty of which I could no more shew by an extract, than the pedant of Hierocles could give an idea of the excellence of his house from the sample of one of its bricks. Besides this tract, whose main object is to prove that the psalms had been composed in rhyme, our author, some years after, published, in his commentaries on the Pentateuch, the two songs of Moses in Exodus and Deuteronomy, verse for verse, and rhyme for rhyme, proving in the same irrefragable manner, that these treasures of Hebrew poetry had likewise been composed in rhyme. The great charge against Le Clerc is, that he has transposed the Hebrew text to his own purpose ; and Calmet, the bitterest of his enemies, (who seems to have indulged more heat than became such a cause) asserts, that any part of Cicero's orations might in the same manner be twisted into rhyme. The experiment has been made on some of them, and failed. But, supposing the trial had succeeded, and rhimes been picked out of the Roman orator, what would have become of his beauty and eloquence so transposed ? *Lost in the transposition.* And conceding Calmet's accusation well-founded, and that Le Clerc has, for the sake of the rhimes, inverted the textual order, (which, as before observed, the simplicity of the Hebrew did not admit,) what harmony, what clearness has been lost ? So little, that where the text itself was obscure, Le Clerc by *restoring* the rhimes, throws both a new light and a new elegance on it. Indeed, he seemed himself aware of the objection ; and by an extract from the Pastor Fido, which he throws into prose, challenges his adversaries to determine the rhimes. The same he observes of the Spanish verse ; both of which, though familiar languages, he provokes them to make trial of : shewing that the rhimes even in these languages, could not be traced in the manner he has done in the Hebrew. But by one well-timed observation, which, however, some of his objectors set at no account, he has put the matter beyond dispute : he proves, that in order to accommodate the rhyme to the verse, and the verse to the rhyme, the Hebrews would sometimes abandon their own language, for that of their neighbours the Chaldæans, when the τελευτον called for it : as in the second psalm v. 12.

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where instead of the legitimate word בן, *son*, which did not answer the rhyme, we have the adscititious word בר *bar*, of the Chaldee, because it assounded to יבער *jibar*; though, when the rhyme did not demand the change, as in verse 7. the word בן, *son*, hath been retained: and in the Exodical song of Moses v. 29. he observes on the corrected words *one jereſcham*, “ſenſus hic, obſervato ομοιοτιλιωτω *levi* mutatione commo-  
 “diſſimus eſt: quod eſt verſuum Hebraicorum τη ομοιοτιλιωτη non leve argu-  
 “mentum, ut oſtendemus in *Diatribâ de Poetica Hebræorum*.” But it is not theſe hymns only, and the pſalms, that are found to rhyme: Le Clerc has made the ſame ſucceſſful experiment on other parts of the ſacred poetry. I ſhall ſelect a ſhort ſpecimen from the “Eſſai”: Le Clerc’s own comments upon which may there be found. It is a part of the ſecond pſalm; and the “Eſſai”, as might well be expected, drew on its author an hoſt of adverſaries. But it ſhews with what ſort of ſpirit his objectors replied, when the great Pſalmanaazar produces the thirty-fourth pſalm, whoſe 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, and 13th verſes he gives us with all their rhimes, and then triumphantly adds, they are “accidental only and inevitable”, ſo inevitable indeed, that Le Clerc had anticipated the very objection; and Pſalmanaazar himſelf, as noticed above, had remarked, that ſuch was the perpetual recurrence of the rhyme, it had been difficult to write a poem in that language that ſhould *not* be compoſed all in rhyme.

Eth mosrothe MO  
 Venaschliche mimmennou, abothe MO,  
 Joſcheb baſchamajim jiſch AK.  
 Adonei jila AG  
 La MO  
 Az jedabbier ele MO  
 Bappho oubacharono jebahale MO.

Rhime

Rhime, in its origin, resembled the bold sweep of the mountain, or the simple majesty of the forest; though, now, by the caprice or fastidiousness of its possessors, it hath often dwindled into the clipt hedge and the trime parterre. But this destroys not the grandeur and dignity and echo of the patriarchal forest, whose oaks, while they shade us and cover us with their venerable arms, serve as an asylum from the obtrusions of impertinence.

Here, says Le Clerc, the third *MO* was unnecessary, had the rhyme not been intended. The author of the psalm might have said *jil AG vajedabber, ele MO*;——which would have done just as well. And if rhyme, adds the critic, had not been the character and genius of the Hebrew, the rhimes themselves had been altogether avoided, on account of the suffix *HEM*——, which, says he, is ungracious to the ear, for proofs of which he refers us to the 118th psalm. It may be necessary to observe, that Le Clerc instances the rhyme by several other proofs, illustrated with the shrewdest remarks and profoundest comments, which I have not yet seen confuted, though sometimes angrily denied.

But it is not the purpose of these papers to argue the question of rhyme in the Hebrew: the negative is left to its oppugners, who however, some of them at least, by their mode of arguing have rendered the proof unnecessary. Yet justice should be done to the famous Psalm-naazar, who, while he denies the rhyme, has so beautifully supported the superior expressiveness of the Hebrew, over the Greek and Roman tongues. It will not lead us from our subject, to observe that this able man, as other scholars do, supposes the Hebrew to have been regulated by prosodial rules. I dare not pretend to deny the fact, but other distinguished authorities, and Beda in particular, imagine that the Hebrew poetry expressed itself rather in rhythm without metre, than in metre with rhythm: forming a kind of broken and disordered, but measured prose, sometimes of long, and sometimes of short syllables, more of them or less, according to the pathos or affection expressed, and not perhaps unlike the rhimed prose of that prophane example, “the humble petition of Mrs. Francis Harris,” or in the vigorous and expressive language

language of Scaliger, (*Loc. citat.*) “ aliquando pauciorum syllabarum,  
 “ aliquando plurium, quales Græcorum *σιχοι καταληκτικοι, βραχυκαταληκτικοι,*  
 “ *υπερμετροι*: non utique quod compensatio fiat *κατα ισοχρουναν*, ut in Græ-  
 “ cis solet: neque enim hoc exprimi potest idiomate Hebraico: sed  
 “ quantum sententia postulat, rythmus nunc longior, nunc brevior  
 “ est. Est enim rythmus, ut doctissimus Beda ex Marii Victorini,  
 “ Augustini, et aliorum scriptis collegit, metris consimilis verbo-  
 “ rum modulata compositio, non metricâ ratione, sed numero syl-  
 “ labarum ad iudicium aurium examinata, ut sunt, inquit, carmina vul-  
 “ garium poetarum. Et quidem rythmus sine metro esse potest, metrum  
 “ vero sine rythmo esse non potest.” So far the venerable Bede,  
 strengthened by the masculine learning of Scaliger; and from the *knock-*  
*down* argument, that Psalmanazar himself has employed, I am inclined  
 to think there is much truth in the observation; and further, that this has  
 actually been the case, not only with the Hebrew verse, but with that  
 of every other people in the world, whose poetry has laboured under  
 strong affections of the mind;\* till time and experience, and art had  
 regulated the paces of their poetry, and taught it to move on stated  
 feet. But should this have been the condition of the Hebrew poetry, its  
 metre can never be distinguished, by any given rule or standard what-  
 ever, because it must have depended less on established laws, than on  
 the *ear*, which was capricious, and open only to the impresson of  
 the sentiment to be expressed. “ Quæ omnia si ad rectæ rationis nor-  
 mam exigas, quid absurdius? Si naturam & affectuum motus spectes,  
 quid verius, quid expressius, quid pulchrius? (*Præl. 23.*)

*And in my God I will knock down an ox. (Psal. 28. v. 19.)*

*Ubelohai adaleg shoor.*

*Procumbit humi bos.*

VOL. IX.

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This

\* Since this was written, the author has found the observation fortified by the learned author of the Hebrew Prælections, who produces instances of it, both from the Greek and from the Latin, especially from a Greek scolion preserved in Athenæus.

This of the Latin poet, (whose rythm *falls* so exactly into the cadence of the inspired bard, that had the Hebrew, like the Greek, formed a part of the Roman studies, we should have supposed it had been borrowed or imitated) is but just reducible to metrical order, and almost out of it. The passage has been admired less for the happiness of its scansion, than for the echo of the sentiment: less for the legitimacy of its metre, than for its “*ad judicium aurium ratio.*” It is the same, I apprehend, with the Hebrew, that expressed what it felt in *rythm*, that is, in a bold but disordered measure, rather than in faithful and certain quantities, and Virgil himself, we know, would on extraordinary occasions, disdain the stated feet that usually governed his muse. But the examples here produced are the strong and unfettered language of nature, which will ever be the same in all ages and countries: and he who expresses that language in the happiest and most forcible manner, will best deserve the name of *inspired*.

As our learned countryman has denied rhyme to the Hebrew, and as his authority must always carry great weight, the academy may not be displeased to see in this place what the illustrious Lowth has said on this subject. I shall not detain them with a long answer.

“ Quod ad eorum attinet sententiam, qui Hebraici carminis artificium  
 “ in ὁμοιοτελευτοῖς unice ponunt, in versuum clausulis similiter definientibus;  
 “ eam quanquam multos habuerit fautores, et eruditos propugnatores,  
 “ Clericum, Garofalum, Fourmentium, multo tamen esse arbitror omnium  
 “ vanissimam, quippe cujus vanitas tam manifeste deprehenditur.  
 “ Nam cum in carminibus alphabeticis nonnullis certo definiuntur versuum  
 “ clausulæ, cumque in eis planè apparet versuum clausulas non  
 “ esse similiter definentes, nullam adhibitam fuisse circa ὁμοιοτελευταῶν curam aut  
 “ cogitationem; clarè id evincitur, Hebraici carminis artificium in ὁμοιοτελευτοῖς  
 “ positum non esse.” (*Met. Har. Brev. Confut.*)

This sort of *Brevis Confutatio* is not the proper mode of disposing of a great and important question; a question that at once involved the interests of biblical literature, and had been maintained by pens surely as learned as his own, without the smallest disparagement to his great  
 erudition

erudition and talents. Fourmontius I have not seen; but Garofalo's "considerazioni intorno à la poesia degli Ebrei" &c., was certainly entitled to more respect. The book was printed at Rome in the year 1707, and in 1710 Le Clerc takes occasion to pay an high compliment to the author's great learning and ingenuity, (see *Bibliothèque choisie. Tom. 20. Art. Livres Historiques*, &c.) Observing, that Garofalo, since the publication of his book, had declared to several of his friends, that he, (Garofalo) when he wrote his "Considerations," had not read or heard of the "Essai", or known that Le Clerc had supposed rhyme to be the character of the Hebrew poetry, which the Frenchman considers as a strong argument, supported as he was by so illustrious a man, that himself had not been mistaken. And on examining Garofalo's volume, it actually appears, that the learned author had in a number of instances agitated the question of rhyme, in the very same manner that Le Clerc had done before. Another happy argument in favor of the "Essai," but Garofalo goes one step further; and asserts, that not only the two hymns of Moses, and the songs of Deborah, and Hannah with the psalms 3, 4, 29, 31, and 33, but that the *Threni*, the song of songs, and the prayers or songs of Jonah and Habakkuk, are likewise in rhyme. And all these he supports with superior address and ability. "Vedrà poscia dichiarata la natura dell' antica Poesia degli Ebrei, la quale non già consiste in versi misurati, come altri s'ha dato di leggieri a credere, ma bensì in una certa cadenza harmoniosa, espressa in rima." Indeed a friend, whose great learning is entitled to the highest respect, informs me, that the late erudite rabbi Openheimer of Prague had assured him a part of the third chapter of the *Threni* was composed in a small elegiac stanza of rhyme, of the Pindaric nature, and irregular, denominated *Schlofchib*: but whether Openheimer ever published the observation, I have not heard. Doctor Lowth, however, says that the whole of the *Threni*, excepting the last chapter, are of the alphabetic order, to which, as we have seen, he denies the rhyme.

What Le Clerc and Garofalo, with their learned associates, have said, does not appear to be shaken by any thing the learned professor has

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written:

written: the argument however more properly belongs to Pſalmenazar, who had uſed it before, as indeed moſt of thoſe who oppoſed Le Clerc, had likewiſe done. The argument, as they have put it, may be reduced to this: “ becauſe the rhyme cannot be traced in the alphabetic, or acroſtic verſes, therefore it cannot be found in verſes of another caſt.” As well might the advocates of the rhyme turn it the other way, and argue, that “ becauſe the alphabetic order cannot be traced in the rhiming verſes, therefore, *claré id vincitur*, it cannot be found in verſes whoſe clauſulæ reject the rhyme.” The fact, indeed, we know to be otherwiſe: but the ſupporters of the ομοιοτελευτον being equally convinced of the exiſtence of the rhyme, as its oppugners are of that of the ακροστιχη, they have an equal right to the benefit of the argument. If any conſequence, however, can be drawn from the reaſoning of the learned profeſſor, it ſtrikes me to be the very oppoſite of what he intended, viz: that the rhyme receded where the acroſtic was employed: for that the alphabetical verſes, which the Prælections themſelves aſſure us were contrived *memoriæ juvandæ cauſâ* (Præl. 3.) rendered the preſence of the rhyme unneceſſary; but that when this mode was diſregarded, the memory, not being aided at the ακρον, or *beginning* of the verſe, might ſometimes require to be aſſiſted at the τελευτον, or *cloſe*: or, to condense the argument, and to ſpeak technically, that the acroſtic, as the word imports, was the *initial*, the rhyme the *final* impreſſion of the verſe. Or, perhaps, the acroſtic might have been a ſpecies of verſe, purpoſely deſigned, and invented to encrease the difficulty of the compoſition, by the excluſion of the rhyme, whoſe recurrence we have ſeen, was almoſt unavoidable. And ſhould this be allowed me, both the previous exiſtence, and the proof itſelf of the rhyme, follow as of courſe. But I inſiſt on nothing: it is a mere conjecture of my own; and the admirers of Doctor Lowth will I hope forgive me.

The Ακροστιχη was common to moſt of the oriental nations; and among the Hindoos, the Syrians, the Arabians, and the Perſians, continues to be uſed even to the preſent day. But we know rhyme to have been their invariable character: the acroſtic, then, not excluding the rhyme  
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from these tongues, may we not, by a parity of reason, infer, that it did not exclude it from the parent poetry, though, for certain reasons not now discoverable, as well as from the peculiar cast and indoles of the language, the rhyme in that tongue might be laid aside when the alphabetic order was observed? Yet, should it be allowed to Garofalo that the *whole* of the Threni are in rhyme, while the four first chapters are acknowledged to be alphabetic; and should the remark of Openheimer appear well founded; what will become of the professor's argument? And thus, I hope, enough has been said to establish the priority of rhyme in the oldest language of which we have any knowledge. Its præantiquity has been argued at some length, because so many learned men had disputed the fact of the rhyme. It is not, however, contended that the Hebrew rhyme is the progenitor of teleutic harmony, further than as that language may be the parent of every other. That which is universal, cannot be partial, and that which belongs to all, is the exclusive property of none. From the lisp of the infant to the lyre of the bard, the rhyme has been a note in the voice of *man*.

Of the ancient Ægyptian poetry not a vestige can be found, unless perhaps the song of Moses in the wilderness may have been composed in that language. But we have seen "*illam linguam vel Ebræam, vel Ebrææ simillimam.*" "*In that day shall five cities in the land of Ægypt speak the language of Canaan,*" (*Isaiab. Chap. 19. v. 18.*) What, therefore, is true of the rhyme in the Hebrew poetry, will be found true in the Ægyptian: and thus the rhyme, familiar in the former, could not be abhorrent to the latter. Yet, if we concede that Moses composed his song in the Ægyptian, we establish the rhyme in that language, and prove that it was familiar to the Israelites under the bondage, who would not have endured, murmuring and discontented, as they were, the introduction of a species of composition altogether novel and unknown.

The Æthiopians, we know, who most probably are the descendants of the old Ægyptians, that spread themselves southward, continue even to this day the *ὀμοιοτελευτον* in their verse; not much unlike the rhimes of  
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the parent Hebrew, from which their language is but a barbarous deflexion.\* The very learned Ludolfus, in his Ethiopic history, *L. 4. cap. 2.*, has observed of the Ethiopians, “inter artes liberales poesim maxime amant, sed sacram duntaxat; ethnicam merito detestantes. Carmina vero Ethiopum in meris consistunt rythmis; si rhythmos vocare licet consonantes ejusdem ordinis versum finientes, quamvis vocalibus diffonantes. Præter eos vix ullum observari potest metrum. Genera varia habent, prout in prosodiâ novæ grammaticæ nostræ adjecta, fufius docebimus.” But unfortunately I am unable to present the academy with the promised specimen; for, on a careful examination, I could find no prosody attached to that edition, which I consulted. One thing, indeed, candor obliges me to confess, because it is at war with the principle I lay down, neither have I any thing to offer against it: but this learned writer has noticed in his grammar, “nominibus, formâ, ordine, et maxime ratione legendi àb orientalibus differunt; scribuntur enim et leguntur dextrorsum more latinorum, ut mireris in tantâ hujus linguæ cum reliquis orientalibus convenientiâ, tantam scripturæ diversitatem inesse.”

From Ægypt the transition is natural to *China*; and some, perhaps, would give the peopling of this country the priority in point of time. Like the Ægyptians, the settlers must have brought with them the language their fathers spoke at Sennaar, together with such of its poetry as was then in use. Now, we have seen the parent language refined its verse; and the first laws of most nations being delivered in poetry, the venerable father of Chinese philosophy borrows his political and moral maxims from the poets of his country. Over these laws and maxims time has spread a sacred rust, and stamped their rhyme with the

\* Ludolfus, however, says that the Æthiopic is the old Abyssinian language, that originated in Saba, the country of the Homerites, who settled in those parts, (*Æth. Hist. Cap. 1.*) But if the present Æthiopic be the old Abyssinian, then must the language be as ancient as its first deflexion from the Hebrew, the very same now that it was several thousand years ago; probably no other than the old Ægyptian, Abyssinia having never been civilized as Ægypt was. The inference is, that the Abyssinian or Æthiopic language having continued unaltered to the present day, when the Æthiopians *rhyme* their poetry, they but do as their progenitors had always done.

the mark of inestimable antiquity. Every page of Confucius quotes the *Chi-Kim*, or *Volume of Verse*, most of whose odes, the great Sir William Jones assures us, "are near 3000 years old, and some, if we give credit to the Chinese annals, considerably older," (*Jones on China*.) certain of these odes, according to Le Compté, being composed by Fohi himself, and forming a part of this most ancient volume. But as their language is stated to be more than three thousand seven hundred years old, who shall presume to fix the beginning of their rhyme, but with their language itself? If it be true, that their laws were composed in verse, the better to assist the memory, and if, as agreed on all hands, the Chinese have a strong affection to music, and that they who made the laws put them into verse, "afin que chacun pouvant chanter les choses qui y sont contenues, elles fussent dans la bouche de tout le monde," let us cease to be astonished, that the harmonious [and impressive rhyme should characterize the poetry of this wise and moral people. In such esteem is the rhyme held among them, that the road to honours and dignities lies but through the temple of their muses: and, independent of the *Chi-Kim*, so very ancient is the Chinese rhyme, that we have four Lilliputian lines, composed by one of their ancient kings, that while they remind us of Mr. Pope's "In amaze, lost I gaze," far exceed it in sentiment and poetry. They are worthy of a King.

Voene khoo skene miene  
 Louh shee nane piene  
 Chi troo i shingh  
 Chioo shai trine kiene.

"When the dragon and serpent are still, we know not the difference, but no sooner do they begin to hiss, than we distinguish them.\*

As

\* The dragon is a device worn by the emperors, and was given to the Chinese by Fohi, as the symbol of their nation.

As the ancient poetry of every language undergoes some change in its progress towards refinement, this mode of verse has been disused for a longer and more varied measure, but *never* to the exclusion of the rhyme, the monosyllabic nature, perhaps, demanding it.\* Their poetry has now become highly cultivated, for which state the various tones or vocal inflexions of which the same word is capable, together with its numerous and musical diphthongs, peculiarly fit it. In one respect it excels any European verse I have seen: while *that* is content with the corresponding *sound*, they take care of the *sentiment*, which must accord in the stated verse of the stanza, and no other. When this mode is followed, they inviolably observe it, executing the poem after the most classical manner, not surpassed by any ancient or modern examples. Could one thing more than another dignify the rhyme, this surely gives it preeminence, the rhyme and the sentiment, and the sentiment and the rhyme, harmonizing together, each in its proper and allotted place. At other times, not Mr. Pope himself, that grand master of antithesis, could set off a rhyme with an opposition in the thought to more advantage: on such occasions, the lines form a rhiming antiposition, sometimes of the passions, sometimes of the elements, sometimes of the seasons, the hours, &c. as love is opposed to hatred, fire to water, summer to winter, morning to night &c. This, undoubtedly, while it enriches their poetry, gives infinite variety to their verse, and if they do not ascend to the boldest flights of Pindar, for which the very nature of their verse, regulated by the strictest laws, unqualifies them, yet, in the *ode* they principally excel, and in that are not transcended by any Grecian master, for a noble and dignified simplicity.† In their  
anacreontics

\* “Tutte le parole però son’ monosillabe; ma accoppiandosi l’una coll’ altra, con cert’ ordine fisso, e determinato; vi si richiede, per apprendere la lingua, uno studio faticosissimo.” (*Viaggio &c. del Signor Aureliano degli Anfi. Printed at Parma, 1692.*)

† Diogenes Laertes and Athenæus have, each preserved to us a hymn to *Virtue*, the composition of Aristotle, and very improperly, I think, called by them a *Scolion*. Scaliger,

anacreontics also they are chaste and sentimental, beyond even the grace of the Teian bard. And we do not find, that in these sympotial and amatory odes the *rhime* has destroyed either the moral or poetical sentiment; witness this, which we give in English, “Ye who drink  
“ out of golden cups, despise not the coarse vessel of the poor man,  
“ who has no slaves to fill it for him; when two of you have deeply  
“ drank, as is your fashion, remember, it may be your fate to sleep  
“ together under the same tree.”

Those who desire to know more of the Chinese poetry and its rhimes, may consult Du Halde, whose account of China I have found more satisfactory than any other, not excepting Fathers Magaillan and Kircher.

Like that of the Hebrews, and, it is presumed, of most infant states, the early poetry of the Arabians consisted in a sort of *rhimed prose*,\* *αμετρον*, but always rhiming, either in a repetition of the very same rhimes, or in the return of similar sounds, corresponding to the first rhime throughout; or again, in such distinct and varied rhimes as fancy or convenience offered. Of the first sort Le Clerc gives us two examples, one from the *Lamiato' l Ajam* of *Tograi*,† whose rhimes, he tells us,

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end

liger, in his Poetics, pronounces it not inferior to any thing in Pindar; and Casaubon in his *Animadversions* on Athenæus, calls it *carmen aureolum*. Might I offer an opinion after such great authorities, I should say it was the work of a great *poet* and a great *philosopher*. The odes of China, it should seem, strongly resemble this of Aristotle in their sober simplicity, and that *virtue* which is observed to animate them.

\* This *rhimed prose* they use even to this day, in their common discourse, as well on affairs of business, as in their salutations and visits of ceremony. When we reflect that the Arabian language is singularly adapted to poetry, being expressive, strong, musical and sonorous, and perhaps the most copious of any in the world, one is tempted to think rhime essential to the language of the muses.

† Vid. *Lamiato' l Ajam*, *Carmen Tograi*, poetæ Arabis doctissimi, cum versione Latina, operâ Edvardi Pocock. Oxon. 1661.

end all in *LI*; the other from that of Abn-eb-ula, all whose rhimes end in *LA*. In this manner, says Le Clerc, nearly the whole of the rhimes in the 119th psalm, are observed to end, terminating in *CHA*. (Vid. "*Effai*," as before.) Such, it seems, was pretty much the state of the Arabian verse, when, soon after the beginning of the seventh century, Mahomet composed his Koran, a work that attracted general attention, and led the way to a more artificial structure of the national poetry; for, under the Caliphate of Arashido, we find the learned Al-Chalil-Ebn-Ahmed-Al Farahidi reducing the Arabian verse to rule, but that rule consisting rather in the adjustment and ordering of the rhyme, than in the distinction of long and short syllables; or in other prosodial regulations. "Be this as it may, the rythm of the Koran, we are told, is far from elaborate, or well constructed.\* But whatever is its deficiency in point of cadence, we are assured it has no deficiency in the rhyme;† as if *that* alone had been worthy of regard, or at least was a primary object with the composer. We may be very certain that, had not the Arabians considered the rhyme a quality essential to their poetry, this artful impostor would not have so rigidly observed it, to the neglect of more substantial ornaments. He was a merchant, that knew mankind, and knew that rhyme graced the poetry of every nation: he knew also that the ear is the inlet to the heart, and that his

poetry

\* Quamvis enim Poësis apud Arabes longe ante illius (Al Caili) ætatem summo studio culta fuerit; ipsum primum novimus, qui ad artis leges eam revocare tentavit. Totum autem hic artificium in literarum Motaharracaton *Motarum* Sawaceno, quiescentium debitâ dispositione situm est." (*Sam. Clarke's Scient. Met. Arab.*)

"Sciendum tamen pleraque eorum omnibus suis pedibus integris apud poetas raro, quædam etiam nunquam usurpari; cum docendi tantum gratiâ ab Al Chililo inventæ et introductæ fuerint istæ formulæ, ut ad eas, tanquam normas, numerosæ illæ, in quas sese diffundunt hi trunci, propagines exigenterentur." (*Ibid. Cap. 5.*)

Delectantur vehementer Arabes stylo rythmico, qua in re cum plurimi auctores imitentur Alcoranum, cujus periodi plerumque in rythmo definant, dici vix potest, quam sedulam operam navant, ut genium ac indolem styli illius rythmici in Alcorano contenti exprimant. Quo frequenter enim rythmus incidit in periodos et commata, eo sublimior et perfectior est dictio."

(*Specimen Arabicum: Auctore Patricio, Dantz.*)

poetry without its music would miss of its effect. We are not, indeed, well informed to what extent the cunning Mahomet improved the Arabian verse, when he boasted the beauty of his Koran to be such, that neither angel nor devil could mend it; but this very boast serves to shew, that the poet had preserved the *form* at least, and characters of the national verse; yet are we not so wholly in the dark, for without putting our infidel feet into the Temple of Mecca for more ancient proofs and authorities, in some of the European libraries, as well as in private cabinets, are to be found a number of Arabian manuscripts prior to the age of Mahomet, all of which are written in *rhime*.\*

Where materials have been wanting for regular history, oral tradition not unfrequently supplies the defect. All nations are proud of their descent, and be their manners ever so rude and barbarous, delight to perpetuate their story. Ambitious of renown, they attach the highest merit to the highest antiquity; and that point once established, are little solicitous about intermediate character. Narrated events pass for recorded history; and having small desire to falsify, the transmitter relates the progressive story of his ancestors as he received it from them. The very fables of antiquity prove by their disguise the truth of the facts they include; and where language throws aside her robe of mystery, simple narration has a claim to confidence. Greece thought it no dishonor to declare the founders of her greatness to have been pirates; and Rome avowed that she owed her origin to a band of robbers. The vagrant mode of life to which the Arabians had been fated, did not permit them to preserve so many records of their history as other nations of better fortunes have done. But they admit, (and the admission not being much in their favor, deserves full credit) that their manners and customs have continued unvaried for these thousand years. Now, we know that nothing so much preserves a language as a continuance of the same habits and manners; for assuredly, new customs and modes of life are followed

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by

\* Quem numerum, (rythmum) uti in omnium gentium et nationum sermone *natura* generavit; ita quoque in antiquissima hac gente Arabum observatur." (*Spec. Arab. Ibid.*)

by a change in the language where they are introduced. This has ever been the case with all nations, and the nature of things, will not suffer it to be otherwise. Neither, if we suppose these vagrant tribes to be the descendants of Ishmael. "In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim." *Isaiah chap. 21 v. 13*. Shall we have much reason to doubt what they tell us. Here, then, we fix our foot, and I offer it as no unreasonable conjecture, that if the language of these people shall have suffered as little alteration as their manners, their poetry can have changed but little from its original cast. And if the whole of that poetry whereof any part hath reached us, (and some of it we know was composed at those early periods called by the later Arabians their *times of ignorance*) be regulated chiefly by the rhyme, this deduction seems naturally to follow, that from the earliest formation of the Arabian verse, the rhyme has been one of its invariable features. In fact, not having any intercourse with the Greeks or Romans, whatever might have been the fashion of their poetry, the Arabians could not have borrowed it of them; so far then its *form* was its own, and it owes nothing to more polished nations. Separated, moreover, like the Hebrews, from the rest of mankind, they could have had little opportunity of new-modelling their verse; and therefore it is reasonable to conclude, that from unregistered times to the period of Mahomet, the character of the Arabian poetry has continued the same; and that, from his time to the present, "neither angel nor devil hath *mended* it."\* Not to mention the Archaic *Cbi-Kim* of the Chinese, I trust I have asserted the claim of rhyme to Trichiliar antiquity.

One institution, however, is highly honorable to these people, and could not, I think, have been borrowed of their neighbours. It gradually

\* This remark is strengthened by the observation of Voltaire in his *Universal History*, where he says that the Arabian poetry had been ascertained before the time of Mahomet, from which period it never altered. (*Tom. 1. C. 5.*) *Kafsa*, from whence the Arabians call rhyme *Kafiaton*, by his royal authority regulated the laws of the Arabian verse: but Al Chili afterwards unsettled these laws of the Caliph, and introduced a better regulation. (*See, Sam. Clarke's Scientia Metric. Arab.*)

dually led them to those literary attainments for which they were afterwards renowned. I speak of their *academy*, formed on the same plan with that before which I have the honor to appear, having for its object the national glory and diffusion of knowledge, with honorary rewards to stimulate the genius of the candidates. Neither did it stop here. We learn from Sir William Jones, that they transcribed the successful pieces in characters of gold, and then hung them up in the temple of Mecca, proclaiming them at once sacred and immortal; the proudest compliment they could bestow! These pieces were distinguished ever after by the name of *Moalbaket*, or *Suspended*; and sometimes, like the Pythagorean verses, by that of *Moadhabet*, or *golden*. Though several musæa and colleges had doubtless existed before, it is the oldest institution of the sort on record, being 1200 years since its first establishment, having preceded their own Hegira, and even the boasted period of their Koran. From a rhiming contest that we read of between Mahomet and the celebrated *Lebid*, the two most distinguished poets of their day, and their verses on that occasion having been *suspended*, it is highly probable that both of them were members of this famous academy.

If the Persians, as Sir William Jones has observed,\* borrowed their poetical measures of the Arabians, we must not be surprised to find the  
rhime

\* The remark of this great orientalist seems very just: for at the end of nine years, Mahomet found himself strong enough to extend his conquests into Persia, beginning with Syria, then under Heraclius. And indeed the great Bochart, in which he has been followed by others, particularly by father Alexander, expresses a strong doubt that the Persian is an original language, See *Pheleg.* Lib. 1. Cap. 15.

The oldest Persian poems that Sir William Jones had seen, were those of Ferdusi in the tenth and eleventh centuries, an epic poem of whose consisted of "sixty thousand couplets in *rhime*, all polished with the spirit of Dryden, and the sweetness of Pope, a glorious monument of eastern genius and learning; which if ever it should be generally understood *in its original language*, will contest the merit of *invention* with Homer himself, whatever may be thought of its subject, (the old History of Persia) or the arrangement of its incidents. An extract from this poem will exhibit a specimen of the *Persian* tongue, very little adulterated by a mixture with the Arabic, and in all probability approaching nearly to the dialect used in Persia, in the time of Mahomet, who *admired it for its softness*,  
and

rhime a constituent appendage of their poetry. But had the rhime not originally formed a part of their verse, we cannot suppose they would all at once borrow it of their unwelcome visitors. We know the strong reluctance of every conquered people to receive the language of their new masters: the old Persians, therefore, seem rather to have adopted a new mode or measure of versification, the words of Sir William importing no more, than to have been ignorant what the rhime was, till Mahomet had instructed them. Those, however, who understand the language, say, that it is admirably well adapted to poetry, and that its verse falls naturally into rhime. Thus, it comes to pass, that the whole of their verse, with few exceptions, is in rhime, though sometimes perhaps capricious, like that of other eastern poetry. Of the structure of the Persian verse I am wholly ignorant, and therefore shall say nothing upon it: but in the wildness of its imaginary, and luxuriance of its description, it bears all the marks and character of the Arabian poetry. Perhaps the scenery of the country, which strongly resembles that of Yemen, may tend to inspire the poet with the same happy source of ideas, and even modes of expression: and all things considered, we must suppose that the Persian poetry partakes the nature of the Arabian.

Observing, perhaps, not the strictest chronological order, it may be remarked in this place of the Turks, that as the Persians borrowed their poetry of the Arabians, these, again, after they had carried their arms into Mesopotamia and Syria, borrowed theirs of the Persians, from whose language they enriched their own, naturally barren and rugged, with a variety of simple and compound words, making the form of the Persian numbers the model of their verse. Like the Persian, their poetry is wholly

and was heard to say, that *it would be spoken on that account in the gardens of Paradise.*" (*History of Persia*.)

But Sir William afterwards gives us a specimen of the *old* Persic itself from the *Zend*, which had been communicated to him as a great favor. He gives it after the prosaic manner, as he received it, but it is evidently rhimed, all the rhimes in stated returns ending in *I. D.* Here, then, we have an actual proof that the poetry of the ancient Persic was in rhime.

wholly in rhyme; and as the Latins, after Greece had submitted to their power, polished and enriched their uncouth dialect, by a close imitation of the smooth and sonorous Greek, so the Turks as wisely enriched theirs by borrowing as much of the manner and grace of the Persian, as their language would allow. The late Mr. Paradise, who was a Byzantine gentleman, and an excellent scholar, I have often heard speak in the highest raptures of the Turkish poetry, some of which he would repeat, observing that the whole of their poetry was in rhyme. Mr. Nott too, the learned translator of Hafiz, has mentioned to me a Turkish poet, whose name I forget, that bore a strong resemblance to Juvenal, in the vehemence and indignation of his verse; perhaps it was *Ruby Bagdati*; the same of whom Sir William Jones speaks in his essay. Yet, rhyme, it appears, has neither impaired the vigor, nor cramped the force of the Turkish Juvenal, who, like the nervous Pope, or perhaps the more stubborn Donne, bars the fury of his satire with the rhyme, as the Indian manticora brandishes his spiked tail, and strikes his adversary with repercussive vengeance.

Let us turn our eyes to Tartary, and then behold what an immense portion of the world rhimes its poetry; Grand Tartary alone comprehending nearly one third of all Asia! We admire, and naturally ask from what source these populous and extended nations derived this strong feature in their verse? And here we must call all those *Tartars*, or *Scythæ*, who bent their course northward, for by that appellation they were anciently distinguished, whether as Asiatics or Europeans. Of these latter Scythæ Strabo thus speaks, *ὡς περ τα πρὸς βορρᾶν μένη*” &c. “ sicut notæ versus septentrionem gentes uno prius nomine omnes vel “ Scythæ, vel Nomades, ut ab Homero appellabantur, ac postea temporis cognitæ regionibus occiduis Celtæ, Iberi, aut mixto nomine, Celtiberi, as Celto-Scythæ dici cœperunt, cum prius ob ignorantiam singulæ gentes uno omnes nomine afficerentur.” (*Lib. 1.*) Of the Asiatic Scythæ the same accurate author speaks, *Lib. 2.*, and gives the geography of them both at large; but it is remarkable, that while

while Diodorus ascribes a cruel and ferocious barbarism to the more northern or European Scythæ, inasmuch, says he, that Pontus acquired the epithet, *αξεινος*, (*Lib. 4.*) and while the excursions of these people have given them a kind of historic notoriety, so little should be known concerning the Asiatic Scythæ. Yet to their origin we are no strangers, and are not at a loss to find the source of their poetry. The northern Scythæ, we find in the correct and judicious Strabo, were the hordes of Elam; or the old Persæ, whom he calls emphatically, *ληστρικοι ανδρες*, *robbers*; *και ορεινη τραχεια πεπιυδοτες*, *men who trusted to their difficult mountains*; that is, those who inhabited the kingdom of Chederlaomer, one of the four kings that caused the five to serve him, according to the history of Moses. (*Gen. cap. 14.*) Now, Strabo, and other ancient geographers shew Elam to be the country lying between Media and Mesopotamia. (*Strab. Lib. 11.*) These Elamites therefore must have spoken either the Hebrew, or an Hebraic Dialect; but after their defeat by Abraham, forming themselves into a band or mass, collected in those flagitious and barbarous times, from the various kingdoms that served Chederlaomer, and spreading north, (the fertile and more inviting plains of Greece having been preoccupied,) they speedily barbarized the tongue, their very wickedness precipitating its downfall. But independent of ancient authorities, and the similar habits of life still common to the Scythæ and ancient Elamites, we have certain Scythic words that are evidently Elymæan, or the old Persic. The earliest orientals, we have seen, rhimed their poetry, and these men, various and violent as they were, must have brought with them such language as they knew, or, properly speaking, had then an existence. And thus we have the origin of our European rhimes, that had taken a septentrional direction so early as the time of Abraham; for in whatever shape the rhyme may now come to us, or however mixed and varied, it may be, still it will be found *Scythic*, and the Scythæ at last the *stirps* of us all." "Hinc" " (scil. Scythis) says Vitranga, "Hinc Galli, "Germani, Gothi, Sali, Celtæ omnes orti sunt, et Belgæ nostrates, nequid Anglos memorem, quod Galli et Britanni veteres eodem ante  
usi

“ uſi idiomate, ut ex tacito conſtat, unde ex eâdem gente videntur ori-  
 “ undi. Hæc autem ſi præpoſuerimus, *quæ facillima et certiffima ſunt*,  
 “ feliciter admodum de linguis harum gentium ſumus judicari. Videlicet  
 “ colligimus hinc primo linguam Scytharum, Celtorum, Gothorum, Ge-  
 “ tarum, Maſſagetarum, Cimbriorum, Teutonum, Germanorum, Belgicam  
 “ veterem (omnes hæ gentes uno idiomata ante fuerunt uſæ, licet pro-  
 “ nunciandi ratio aliquo modo per ſucceſſum temporis fuerit variata)  
 “ ex orientalibus linguis omnino derivandam eſſe,” &c. &c. (*Lib. 1. Cap. 3.*)

But I have ſaid, that the Elamites with their language carried their poetry into Scythia. This both analogy and reaſon tell us : We know too that in the time of Auguſtus, the Scythæ had their poetry, whatever it was ; for Ovid tells us us, the Getæ were pleaſed with the verſes he had compoſed in their language, whoſe barbariſm, as he calls it, however it might ſuit their own modes of verſification, but ill accorded with the ſtructure of the Latin.

“ Ah ! pudet, et Getico ſcripſi ſermonē libellum,

“ Stricteque ſunt noſtris barbara verba modis.

“ Et placui, (gratare mihi !) cœpique Poetæ

“ Inter inhumanos nomen habere Getas.”

(*De Pont. 4. Ep. 13.*)

It is not improbable therefore, that the *rhime*, (which we have beheld ſo interwoven in the oriental poetry, that their bards felt difficulty to avoid it, but which we have alſo beheld offenſive to the Latin,) might have been a principal objection with our exiled poet, who found its recurrence in the Getic, formed as that language was of the ancient Perſic, an obſtacle perpetually in his way.\* Nothing certain, I confeſs, can be deduced from it, except that the Getic language did not accord with the

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Latin

\* The firſt line of the quotation from Ovid ſtrongly implies, that the poet had compoſed Latin verſe with the Getic rhime ; and the ſecond as ſtrongly that he had alſo adapted the Getic words to the Roman quantities ; this comment, I apprehend, has never before been offered.

Latin ratio ; an argument, that well applies to all the fantastic attempts of different verse-makers, in different ages, to bend and compel their own tongues to the prosody of the Greek and Latin ; a practice that cannot be more severely reprehended, or in more dignified language, than in the words of Scaliger on another occasion ; “ Hebraismus, Syriasmus, et “ Arabismus, nullo modo ad metrorum Græcorum aut Latinorum regulam “ revocari possunt ; etiam si cœlum mari misceatur.” (*Scalig. in Chron. Euseb.*) Writers of this sort have not even the merit of *novelty*, and the example of the sweet-tongued Ovid, who knew what his own language was capable of bearing, full as well as any monk whatever, might have taught them a better lesson.

We have now taken a large view of the question. And surely there must be something strikingly natural in this species of harmony, when all nations, howsoever distinct and unknown to each other, howsoever differing in the form and structure of their language, not only concur in the adoption of the *rhime*, but apply it, as the fairest grace and ornament of their poetry ! It must possess a charm sweeter than any note in music : for we find certain enlightened nations, that have a taste for music, and even excel in it, decry and ridicule the music of other countries. The Chinese, whose ear undoubtedly is more harmoniously constructed than ours, treat European music with contempt, declaring they cannot comprehend it. We return the compliment ; yet neither ridicules the *rhime* of the other, or understands not its application. I shall just observe, that with their arms, the descendants of Timur-lenc carried into India the language and poetry of the Persians : yet the Indians had their poets long before the time of Timur-lenc, particularly *Mir Rbusr*, on whose poetry, composed wholly in rhyme, not only the Indians, but all the orientals set the highest value. The Indian Mahometans, however, entertain such respect for their prophet, who taught the Persians a better versification, that they usually compose in Persic : and if they *do* write in Hinduoi, still observant of the rhyme, adapt it to the Persic structure. Thus, the sun of poetry, that rose in the east, still pours its lustre on the world, illumining all with the rays of rhyme ; and should it again be eclipsed by barbarism, its splendors will set in the west.

Whoever

Whoever makes the slightest observation will perceive it impossible, in the flux and multitude of discordant languages, existing, perishing, and changing every moment, that rhyme should have been borrowed by one from the other. The Hebrews and Arabians, in particular, as observed above, were shut out for a long, long time, from the rest of the world, and neither composed treatises of prosody themselves (the Hebrews never, and the Arabians, as we have seen, not till after the time of Mahomet) nor communicated their poetry to their neighbours. We must not reason, from the state of things as they *are*, to the state of things as they *were*. Numerous are the circumstances, that have given birth to a new order, and none more than the propagation and establishment of the gospel, with the lights that typography has thrown upon human knowledge. Formerly the communications of knowledge were few, and those confined to private libraries, chiefly of Monarchs, inaccessible to the multitude; which alone may account for the slow progress, that science, till of late years, had made in the world. To reason philosophically, therefore, we must not, we cannot suppose, that one nation *borrowed* its rhyme of another: but that each language, having its own peculiar tone, constituted as it always must, its own peculiar verse; that rhyme, from the very nature of language itself, has been a mode or quality, which entered more or less, into the music of every tongue, whose construction would endure it, forming a constituent part of its harmony, and that its *universality* proves there must be something in it less dissonant than agreeable, less barbarous than natural. For, not considering the genius of the Greek and Roman tongues, from the moment we leave school, we are prejudiced in their favor, and bow to their authority; and unconscious that we retain the impressions of education, which never wholly forsake us, conceive there can exist no excellence out of these languages. This, I am persuaded, has more influence on our minds than we are aware of, or perhaps are disposed to allow. But, if pleasure and instruction be the end of poetry, the office of rhyme cannot, I apprehend, be more successfully employed than in the words of the philosophic Johnson,

“ To point a moral, or adorn a tale.”

I come now to the most difficult, though not the least pleasing part of my subject, the Phœnician poetry. The learned academy does not require to be told, that the Carthaginian and Phœnician tongues are supposed to be the same, and that, if we except the lines in the *Pœnulus* of Plautus, no remain whatever of the Phœnician verse hath descended to us. But the Hebrew and Phœnician being the same language, or at least sister dialects, it follows, that what attaches to the one, attaches to the other; and that, if the Hebrews rhimed their poetry, the Phœnicians rhimed theirs. The verses that Plautus gives us, were perhaps never yet written in the Punic: had we them, however, accurately penned after the old Carthaginian manner, it is probable we should be less at a loss, than we are now to acquire their true understanding. Plautus, it is certain, has translated them, but with too much latitude, as Bochart has proved after the most satisfactory manner. The rhimes indeed are not obvious; for the transcribers of Plautus, by writing in the Latin character, and not understanding the proper sound of the Phœnician vowels and consonants, might not be very correct in putting down the Punic words: and what has been observed above concerning the Hebrew, Chinese, and other unfamiliar poetry, applies here in the very same extent. Even in the Greek and Latin, of which the copyists had always some knowledge, the *obscurancy* of transcribers is the perpetual complaint of the critics, who, however, by their skill and accuracy in these languages, and their perfect knowledge of the rhythm of the poets, have generally been able to restore the true reading. But the total ignorance of the copyists here, and until of late years, of the critics themselves in the lines before us, might easily have let in as many errors, as there are words in the verses. Even the transposition of a sentence, or of a single word, might defeat the rhyme, and though not alter the sense, yet confound and embarrass the rhythm. And, indeed, supposing the text were completely restored,\*

the

\* So little hope have we of this, that I have not seen two editions of Plautus, whose text has agreed in the reading of these lines. It looks, as if the editors had been running a race, to see which of them should deviate farthest from the true lesson: yet none of them materially

the true Carthaginian pronunciation would still be wanting, without which the position and return of the rhyme must for ever continue uncertain. Neither are we very sure, that Plautus himself was correct; and if we may judge by the looseness of his translation, it should seem he was not. Yet I would not be understood to disparage the venerable Plautus, whom I do not the less respect for having preserved to us the only existing fragment of the Phœnician muse.

Whate'er our predecessors taught us,  
I have a great esteem for Plautus.

But we know that the Septuagint themselves, as Cappellus has abundantly shewn in his *Critical Notes*, have with all their accuracy and industry, betrayed in many places the grossest ignorance of the text, from which they translated. Most true it is, that, in the time of Plautus, notwithstanding the recency of the first Punic war, the Carthaginian language was utterly unfamiliar to his readers, or the poet had not been his own interpreter. All these circumstances considered, and many more that might be added, it is not wonderful that the rhymes should not stare us in the face. But enough of accuracy has remained, to enable the learned Le Clerc to gather up the rhymes; and it must be owned, that, with the assistance of the Great Bochart, he has performed his task tolerably well; to me, at least, in the most perspicuous and beautiful manner; assuming only, what it would be uncandid not to allow him, because he has proved the fact, that Plautus consolidated two and twenty lines of the Punic into the eleven of his own. One thing more I would add, that although we should punctuate the words in Plautus, after the manner of the Hebrews, or of the Syrians, there would, even then, be

no

materially differs from the other in his general interpretation of the words. Le Clerc, it is presumed, with so excellent a guide as Bochart, had an equal right to amend and restore the text, especially if he inserted no one word of his own, to make out the rhyme. Nay, I am of opinion, that the rhyme itself is the best guide to the true reading of the passage, if what Le Clerc tells us be a fact; viz. that in several places of the Septuagint, where the version abounds in more words than the text of the original seems to warrant, if you restore the *rhyme*, the Septuagint shall be found to have translated faithfully.

no certainty that the Carthaginians pronounced them according to such punctuation. For instance, the word בנורתי, that forms the rhyme in the 6th verse, who, says Le Clerc, can say whether the Carthaginians pronounced it *Benothai*, or *Benothi*, or again, *Benothe*? But it would detain us too long, were we to go further into the argument. Suffice it, that Bochart has shewn the Punic, and its translation by Plautus, to be widely different, in that part especially where Hanno beseeches the gods to grant him some certain sign, by which he shall know his nephew and daughters; of this Le Clerc very properly avails himself, and throwing the whole into Chaldee characters, confronts the same with the Roman, accompanied with his own version in the French, verse for verse.

	נא אתעליונים ועליונות	Na eth eljonim <i>veljonoth</i>
	שכורת יסמכון זור	Shechoreth jismchoun <i>zoth</i>
	כי נתם מלכי	Chi nittham <i>milchi</i>
	ומתדברי עש קי	Oumithdabbre <i>is ki</i>
5.	לפוחנה אות במצותי	Lephochanath oth <i>bimtfoti</i>
	את בני ואת בנותי	Eth bni veth <i>bnothi</i>
	ברוח רוב שלהם	Brouah rob <i>schellaben</i>
	עליונים ובמשורתהם	Eljonim <i>oubimfchourathehem</i>
	בנות שנבנו לי	Bnoth fchenignbou <i>li</i>
10.	ובן אחי	Ouben <i>achi</i>
	בטרם מות וחוהו	Bterem moth <i>vchanoutho</i>
	תא נחלכחי אנטידמרכו	Tha nhelachti <i>antidamarco</i>
	איש שידעו לי ברם תפל	Ifch fchejada li bram <i>thippel</i>
	אח חילי שכינתם לאפל	Eth chale fchchinatham <i>lophel</i>
15.	את בן אמיצ	Eth ben <i>amits</i>
	דבור תם נקוט נוה אנורסטוקלים	Dibbiur tham ncot nave <i>Agorastoclis</i>
	חותם חותי הכיור הזה	Chotem chanouthi hacchior <i>hazze</i>
	לי חוק זית נושא	Li chok zoth <i>noze</i>
	בין החיל חוי לולגבולם	Ben hacajil hivvou li <i>ligboulam</i>
	לשבת תם	Lschebeth <i>tham</i>
	בוא די עלי תרע אנא הנ	Bo di ale thra inna <i>hinno</i>
	אשאל אם מנכר לו שמי	Eschal im manchar <i>lo schmo</i>

Whatever

Whatever may be the result of Le Clerc's rhimes, it is necessary to observe, that the Africans of the present day rhyme their verse, whether that ratio be continued to it from the Phœnicians, through their Carthaginian ancestors, or of later introduction by the Arabians. The former, I am inclined to think, the African tongue being found to partake more of the Tyrian than Moorish dialect. The Maltese is a supposed dialect of the Phœnician or Carthaginian; which is extremely probable, the situation of Malta having rendered it a port of great convenience to the trade of Carthage, that subdued and colonized it: and I am well assured, notwithstanding the island has so often changed its masters, that the language of the aboriginal natives, while it resembles the African, possesses a venerable air, being perhaps the old Carthaginian somewhat corrupted, or a dialect compounded of Hebrew and Phœnician. And indeed, the same learned friend before-mentioned tells me, that the language of the natives has a strong tincture of the Hebrew; adding, that he has known an ordinary Maltese and an Irishman converse with as little difficulty as a Connaught and a Munster-man. The conclusion I would draw is this, that the two tongues being so near a-kin, let their present deflexion arise from what it may; and the oldest Irish poets we know of having composed in rhyme, Le Clerc was not mistaken, when he asserted that the Phœnicians rhimed their poetry.

While on this subject, the academy will, I trust, allow me one or two short observations, that arise out of it. The most learned Gronovius has given us a translation of the lines in question from Petitus, (*Miscel. L. 2. c. 3.*) somewhat differing from that of Plautus. Without detaining the academy by going into the whole of the lines, the remark I would offer shall be confined to the first, as it stands in Petitus.

“ Ythalonim, vualonoth si chorathifima comfyth.”

This Gronovius reads and stops thus,

“ Neth

“ Neth alonim, ualonoth, fecor eth ifi macum foth.”

which, by the way, forms a good rhyme. This verse however Gronovius translates after Petitus, “ Incline, et advortite, o di, deæque, quorum sub numine viri hujus civitatis sunt.” Against the translation I have nothing to offer, nor would it become me ; but it differs from Plautus’s own, though perhaps not much from Le Clerc’s ; yet more literally it might be rendered, *superos superasque adoro qui incolunt hunc locum*. Again I must repeat, that I consider the old Phœnician to have differed but little from the Hebrew ; and were the text in the line before us well restored, we should suppose that not Hanno, but some inhabitant of old Jerusalem were speaking.

את עליונים וזליונה אסכך החושבי מקום זה

I would ask any orientalist whether the verse thus slightly amended, be not genuine Hebrew, although perhaps it may not with Le Clerc, have consulted the rhyme?

Were there a doubt that the Phœnician and Hebrew embraced the rhyme as languages, we have an indisputable proof that their colony at Carthage, notwithstanding their long mixture with Africans, had for several hundred years, after the time of Plautus, retained a great deal of the old dialect of Tyre. The celebrated doctor of Hippoo, himself an African and eloquently learned, speaking of *Messiah*, expressly says, “ which word agrees with the Punic, as do many other Hebrew words, *nay almost all of them*.”

After such authority we must no longer doubt the close affinity of the two languages, or not conclude that the genius of the one transfused itself into the other, commixing as it were, and settling in it. This then conceded, it follows that the characteristic rhyme of the old characterized the new music, having been only transplanted ; like the vine, that, passing from one soil to another, changes its flavor, but retains its original quality.

I shall

I shall only add, that Le Clerc in the *Biblioth. choisie*, Tom. 11. Art. 2. has given us impressions of twelve Phœnician medals, with their inscriptions, found by his friend Mr. Bary in Andalusia, the letters on which are evidently Hebrew. The learned author offers no conjecture as to their age, or how they might have come there, but I think it extremely probable, they may be as old as Plautus's Hanno, who it is certain, took the rout of Spain, and voyaged *viâ* Gibel-Tarack.

While it is now universally agreed that the Greeks were descended either from the Phœnicians, or Ægyptians, or perhaps from both, we naturally enquire, how it happens, that in the form and construction of her language, Greece should differ so materially from the oriental? The answer is not difficult. So early as the time of Abraham, Greece began to be peopled from the east. Their oriental origin is satisfactorily made out in the two *Chronica* of Eusebius and Marsham, *Herod. L. 11. Strab. L. 6, Meursius de Reg. Athen. Vossius de Orig. et Progr. Idol.* and other authors. The language of the settlers would not have materially differed from the pure oriental. Vitringa and Father Kircher shew at large its rise and progress; the latter proving the ancient Greek to have as nearly resembled the Ægyptian, as the present Italian resembles the Latin: and indeed Pausanias has noticed a statue of Agamemnon, extant in his time, the inscription, on which was written *ἁν-ορsum*, ἐπὶ τῷ λαῷ ἐν δεξιῶν. How then, it will be asked, came their language to deflect in a manner so extraordinary? Their commerce, undoubtedly, was a principal cause, the numerous and commodious ports of Greece receiving into her bosom an influx of strangers, whose various dialects composed in no long time a language distinct from what the colony had brought with it. Their *pride* too, which induced them to ascribe their origin rather to the earth as grasshoppers, or even to aboriginal robbers, and piratical adventurers, than to *barbarians*, as they affected to call the Orientals, had a large share in this change, and might prompt them, more even from choice than from necessity, to strike out a language for themselves. Their great talents, favoured by

a propitious climate, and a concurrence of circumstances never likely to happen again, admirably qualified them for such an undertaking. Nor is it improbable, that this vain and aspiring people might endeavor to form a tongue, that should differ in all respects from the Orientals, as well in the complex order of its phrase, and their manner of writing, as in the total exclusion of the *rhime*: as if they scorned to be indebted even for a *winged word* to any nation but their own. Even the divine Plato, from whom more candor might have been expected, proudly derives certain primitive words from a spiritual source, as the language of superior intelligences; but with shame and reluctance confesses the word *πυρ* to be of barbarous origin, *ονομα βαρβαρικον*, that had some how stole itself upon the Greek; seeking thereby to conceal the real origin of his country.

The Orientals, as we have seen, rhimed their poetry; and I did expect to find in some of the *Συλλια*,\* or other of the early Greek verse, a solitary rhime, that, while it marked the legitimacy of its birth, might have pointed some one of those moral sentiments, which at all times, especially in the infancy of their state, this ingenious and wise people impressed on their youth. The great flexibility of their language had promised something of the sort. But, after a laborious search, no trace of the rhime has been found, or at least at the period when one would think it might have been indulged. Still, however, I am inclined to think the first Græcians, whether Cadmæi, Cecropii, or Danai, rhimed their poetry, whatever they might have done afterwards. The colony must have brought with it that language, out of which sprang the daughter, whose beauty was appointed to enamour the world: but if they *did* bring their language with them, then, assuredly, the rhime distinguished their first poetry. The song, undoubtedly, whether festal or instructive, was their first species of verse. Their *Νομοι* prove it, which were sung, *παρ' οἶνον*, over their wine. *Εἰδοτο δὲ Ἀθηναῖσι καὶ Χαλκιδεὺσι Νομοὺς παρ' οἶνον, ὡς Ἑρμῆς πρὸς Φησίην ἐν ἐκτῷ περὶ Νομοθετῶν*, says Athenæus, *Deipn. Lib. 14. cap. 3.* Originally *Νομοι* signified

\* See Append. No. 3.

nified nothing more than a tune or song; but these songs leading their youth to the practice of virtue by precept and wholesome discipline, in process of time obtained the name of *laws*. (*vid. Aristot. Prob.* 19.) It is astonishing therefore that these songs, prompt at first and inartificial, like those of other unpolished states, (for then such was Greece) should not have borne any mark of the rhyme, influenced as their first poetry was by its oriental origin. And this is the more extraordinary, because on amatory and symposial occasions, man is naturally given to turn his discourse into cadence and metre, as the sage Plutarch has observed.\* Nor the less so, as the music that always accompanied the song, and inspired the fallies of their mirth, while the branch of myrtle passed from hand to hand,† might have either edged the jocose and playful Σκομμα, or pointed the close of their Νομοι, which Aristotle expressly tells us were sung *ἐπιλαδυνταί*, lest they should be forgotten;‡ and we know that nothing impresses a gnome or proverb stronger on the memory than a *rhyme*. Yet,

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after

\* ΓΕΝΟΜΕΝΟΙ ΔΕ ΤΟΙΟΥΤΟΙ, ΠΡΟΣ ΤΑΣ ΕΠΩΔΟΥΣ ΚΑΙ ΣΥΜΜΕΤΡΟΙΣ ΜΑΛΙΣΤΑ ΦΩΝΑΣ ΕΚΦΕΡΟΝΤΑΙ. *Et qui tales sunt redditii, ad cantilandum vocesque mensura contentas maxime efferuntur.* (*Symp. Lib. i. Quest. 5.*)

† ΑΔΕΙΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΜΥΡΡΙΝΗΝ, is a well known sentence or gnome of the Greeks. See Plut. *Symp. Lib. i. Quest. 1.* ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑΝ ΔΕ ΑΦΕΞΗΣ ΕΚΑΣΤΩ ΜΥΡΡΙΝΗΣ ΠΑΡΑΔΙΔΟΜΕΝΗΣ, &c. τ. λ. *deinde unusque propriam cantilenam, acceptam myrto &c.* (*Plut. Ibid.*) This circumstance may account for the constant mention of the myrtle, by Anacreon and other Greek poets, in their songs, as it always accompanied their repasts. The ΣΥΝΣΕΦΑΝΗΦΟΡΕΙ in the catch translated in a former note, shews that the myrtle, as a *wreath* at least, formed a part of their entertainments. Sometimes they introduced the *rose*, from whence our proverb *under the rose*, taken probably from some moral scolion now lost; and sometimes the *laurel*: but the *myrtle* was the never-failing attendant on the Athenian feasts.

‡ Whatever some moderns may think, the *memory* of old was held in high respect, and even came to be deified. The muses themselves were said to be the daughters of *Mnemosyne*, and are invoked as such.

“ ΜΝΕΜΟΣΥΝΗΣ ΘΥΓΑΤΕΡΕΣ,” (*Arist. εις Ερμ.*)

And Virgil,

*Et meministis enim, Divæ, et memorare potestis.*

*Æn. 7. v. 645.*

after a laborious search into and investigation of the fragments and detached sentences of the Greeks, which Athenæus, Tzetzes, old scholiasts and others have collected or commented on, I have not been able to lay my finger on a rhyme, I mean *ancient* rhyme of the Greeks, that bears at all on the question. I find, indeed, that old Simmias Rhodius, who flourished at the commencement of the Olympiads, and according to Suidas 406 years after the Trojan war, dedicated a copy of verses to Diana in her obstetric capacity, which Dr. Ascham acquaints us was composed in rhyme; but which appears to be nothing more than a verse-constructed egg, called by Simmias himself the "Egg of a Musical Bird," whose hard *yoke* sat uneasy on this *poacher* in Parnassus. After this followed the ax and altar of our bard, his wings and his lyre; — οὐκ ἔστι λυγρὸν. All which gave birth to christian altars, globes, cups and balls, pyramids, and other poetic *evils*; *ab ovo usque ad malum*. Could Pliny have looked from his grave, and beheld an addle-headed Monk laying an egg, would he not have again exclaimed, *operose nihil agens*!.

Some critics have detected in Homer and other Greek writers, certain *Affonants*, or words that echo; but these are only occasional, and perhaps more the effect of chance than design: though a better reason may be offered; that, such is the harmony of nature, it were impossible to give a beautiful expression to the *sense*, and not to express the *sound* with it. In this very principle lies the *germen* of rhyme. Rhyme, we have said, is the language of nature. A sound grand or terrific accords not with one that is soft and tender; for in the recurrence of the same sound their contrary expressions can never be felt. If a sublime sound be required to express the thunder of the battle, or the shock of jarring elements, (and in what language can they be expressed *without* sublimity?) shall we seek its similar cadence in the murmur of the rivulet, or the whisper of the breeze? And if they *do* join, what effect can they produce, but unwelcome discord, that, while it abases the subject, disappoints and offends the ear? If then a sublime sound require another equally sublime, shall not their consonance amplify its grandeur? And must not *rhyme* be the noblest harmony of the muse? Take this  
Euphonic

Euphonic Assonant of Theocritus, which I believe has never been noticed. Alcæna says to her twin-infants, whom she had put to rest,

Εὐδὲτ' ἔρκα βρεφῆα ἡλυκυρον καὶ γερῆσθι μὲν ὑπνον,  
Εὐδὲτ' εἰμα ψυχὰ δὲ ἀδελφῶν, εὐσοα τεχνῶν,  
Ὀλβιοὶ εὐναζοισθε, καὶ ὀλβιοὶ αὖ κοισθε.

*Idyll 24.*

These lines became a kind of *Nunnon*, or *Nurse's song*, as it was called; for the Greeks had almost as many kind of songs, as subjects. The *νυννίον*, or *Nænia*, was divided into two kinds, one that cheered and invited the infant to suck; as an authority for which Quintilian (*L. 1. c. 10.*) quotes Chrysippus; "*Chrysippus etiam nutricum quæ adhibentur infantibus allectationi suum quoddam carmen assignat.*" The other, we are told by Athenæus, (*Deipn. L. 14. c. 3.*) was sung as a *καταβαυκαλησιν*, or lullaby, as Hesychius interprets it, a sort of *Επασμα*, like this before us, that hushed and composed the infant to sleep. But although the assonants in the last line are not a direct rhyme, I cannot help imputing the words *ευναζοισθε* and *κοισθε* to something more than mere accident, the plaintive rest or pause on the words in the position they hold in the verse, having something in it uncommonly soothing and musical, independent of the beauty of the sentiment. But if the words were accident only, it proves that on *some* occasions the *ὁμοιοπρωτον* might not be unfavorable to the Greek, but even be employed with advantage. I will venture to say, the most learned critic cannot substitute a word for *κοισθε*—a word not echoing to its sister-word—that shall have an effect half so graceful and harmonious. The rhimes, for so I would call them,\* are emphatic; and not only happy in the place they occupy in the verse, but in the very sentiment itself: each is a sort of set-off against the other, and both harmonize in the same fortunate point. I know of no rhyme in the English language so truly musical, or that possesses a more elegant antithesis. And this again leads us to the point, where we set out; that rhyme is natural to children,

\* Quintilian entertains the very same idea of it. "*Tertium est, quod in eandem finem venit ὁμοιοτελευτον: Ea vero videtur optima in quibus initia sententiarum et fines consentiunt; ut et pene similia sint verbis, et paribus cadant, ut eodem modo definant.* (*Rhet. de fig. verb.*)

children, and that infants delight in it. The Sicilian bard, who was no stranger to the voice of nature, felt, acknowledged, and applied its truth, in one of the most charming verses that ever fell from the pen of a poet.

While the Greek language retained its purity, we have seen that no poem professedly in rhyme, distinguished its verse. From the time of Homer to that of Gregory Nazianzene, at the latter end of the fourth century, was considerably more than a thousand years; and so long did this admirable language continue, if not in all its ancient splendor, at least an expressive and harmonious tongue. The christian Isocrates may be esteemed the last of that great and fallen people, a dreadful memento of poor humanity! After this time, certain hymns, it is said, began to be composed for the Greek church, in rhyme, which, should they be the same, continue to be sung by that communion. Indeed, as the first poetry of every nation has generally been employed in religious purposes, christianity, when she ceased to be persecuted, would naturally recommend herself in numbers; and in order to give a more sacred air to the new religion, might wish through the emphasis of the rhyme, so happily adapted to music, both to draw attention, and to interest the heart, by an impressive devotion. Could the date, however, of these hymns be well ascertained, we might probably determine the first rhimes in the Greek, after its declension; a painful and mortifying enquiry, that would reward us only with the recognition of what it *was*, the bitter downfall of the finest language that ever elevated man above the brute; and bring us at last to the tenth or eleventh century, stumbling on a miserable epigram, or an impious epitaph, whose wretched rhyme, while it humbles human pride, proves that of all barbarians a *Bad Taste* is the worst. “Eo sunt redacti miseri Græci, ut nec legere nec cantare Græcè  
“sciunt amissaque omni pristino cultu, cum cæteris barbaris ritibus, musam  
“quoque barbaram sint amplexi.” (*Voss. de Poem. cant. &c.*)

Of the Latin it is more difficult to speak: and here it is not material to our purpose whether the old Etruscan was Canaanitish, or Phrygian, or Pelasgic: its original uncouthness is acknowledged, and it was not till  
after

after much care and pains had been employed on it, that it became a smooth or graceful tongue. Luculent it never was. Its best writers always confessed its difficulties, and its critics perpetually recommended the study and adaptation of the Greek to render it perspicuous and musical. Perhaps, the sternness and martial turn of the Romans might have contributed to give the language that iron aspect, which it never wholly lost. Even the Court of Augustus did not think the language sufficiently polished without the aid of the Grecian file, nor thought their youth properly instructed till a Grecian education had tuned and regulated their words. To every nation which they conquered, the political Romans gave their own tongue; but conscious of their rusticity, Greece they left in possession of hers, borrowing rather than giving to her, herein shewing their masterly and consummate wisdom.

Grecia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes  
Intulit agresti Latio.

But it is not necessary I should compose a history of the Latin tongue. The only question is, did the Romans rhyme their verse? They did not: the terminations of their *casēs*, and the embarrassing position of their words scarcely allowing the attempt: to say nothing of their close imitation of the Greek, and their dislike of whatever that nation disapproved. Well, therefore, might the rhyme be abhorrent from their language. Yet have we the most learned of the Romans making an effort at a grace which perhaps he deemed natural, but found forbidding to the tongue that himself had enriched and assisted to polish. I shall extract from the *Adversaria* of the learned Barthius a part of the seventh chapter of the thirty-first book. Its curiousness will apologize for its length.

“ Consonantium syllabarum in fine versuum nos hic rythmum appellamus, non quem doctissimus Victorinus in grammaticâ et alii Artigraphi docent, quem quidem nostrum, quamvis ultimis seculis corrumpendæ Latinitati summus auctor erat; etiam aliis in generibus versuum non abhorruisse

horruisse verè Romanos decent affectatè scripti hi versus M. Varronis  
*Ὀνός λυγρός.*

Et Orthophallica attulit Pfalteria  
 Quibus sonant in Græcia dieteriâ,  
 Qui fabularum collocant exordia.

In quam rem et alii priscorum loci adduci possent, si analectica nostra poetica exscribere vellemus. Sufficit vero Terentiani auctoritas, qui rythmos a metris ita distinguit, et utrumque genus in usu fuisse confiteatur: et eam distinctionem novit ultimum etiam ævum, studio, non ignorantia peccans."

Not having the *Analectica* of this learned man, from the grave Varro I pass to the accomplished Cicero, who, in my humble opinion, was as poor a poet as he was an able orator. His

*O fortunatam natam me consule Romam*

has been often quoted as a rhyme, and is therefore noticed here: but it is more a pun than a rhyme, and a vile pun too, as wretched as this of a much better poet, that yet has been considered as a rhyme.

————— Consul vetus ac sine fastu  
 Scribere bis *fastis*, quanquam diademata crinum  
*Fastigatus* eas. (*Apol. Sidon. Paneg. in Consulat. Anthem. Aug. v. 111.*)

Here, beside the miserable affectation of the rhyme, if it must be one, we have an egregious solecism, for *fastigium* makes *fastigiatus*, and cannot, by any analogy, become *fastigatus*, there being no such word. But Cicero has left us another rhyme, rather better than his unfortunate *Fortunatam*, and as it contains a moral not unlike the Proverbs of Solomon, it deserves some regard.

Quod fecisse voles in tempore quo morieris,  
 Id facias, juvenis, dum corpore sanus haberis.

Had no monkish rhimes ever been worse than these, I should not quarrel with them. Horace likewise has given us a precept in rhyme: he was  
 however,

however, too chaste and correct a poet, to have purposely designed it.  
 “ Non me fugit in veterum scriptis nonnunquam istiusmodi consonantes  
 “ clausulas occurrere, sed adeo eæ raræ sunt, ut vel ipsa raritas satis  
 “ ostendat illos vel aliud agentes, vel necessitate metri compulsos eas usur-  
 “ passe.” *Voss.*

Non satis est pulchra esse poemata : dulcia sunt :  
 Et quocunque volent animum auditoris agunto.

*Art. Poet.*

But these are spots in the bright sun that warmed the poetry of Rome : and it was not till about the middle of the fifth century, that the Latin received any material corruption. At that time, the author of the panegyric above quoted, introduced a sort of sparkling and clinking, as well in his prose as in his verse, which the Latin never lost, till Erasmus and Longolius by their examples exposed the frippery, and banished it from the tongue. Unhappily, it was too successfully imitated for a thousand years. “ A quo deinceps cæteri omnem eloquentiam in affectatos illos rhymos fregerunt, multa paucis includere, et consonis sententiarum clausulis velut harmonicum genus dicendi affectantes. Et id quidem scribendi genus in Monachorum postea scriptis tantas radices egit, ut vix versus sine rythmo, vix oratio ulla prorsus sine versu scripta plurimis seculis fuerit.” *Barth. Ibid.* And again

“ Ab hoc autem exemplo (scil. Sidonio) sequens ætas omnem aliam laudem contemnere cœpit, eloquentiam veram et ingenuam et facilem prorsus aspernata, hanc autem ut acutam et nervosam, et summam denique omnium adeò inhians, ut versus etiam nullos scripserit, aut pro legitimis denique habuerit, nisi in quibus ille omnium rerum gratissimus rythmus, ita componeret mediam syllabam, ut illa ultimæ responderet, in quo artificium omne condendi carminis esse existimabatur, &c.—At neque hoc genere stetit infelicitas judiciorum. Supernati sunt ingeniosiores alii qui triplici quadruplicique rythmo hexametros suos infringentes, extrâ omnium laudum aleam provecti eâ commendatione habebantur ; inter quos insignis fanè est Bernardus Morlanensis, non sine acutâ et multiplici lectione scriptor,

quem emulari etiam utroque pollentior hodie vix quisquam valeat.—&c. Sed observatum nobis ante eum Petrum quendam nomine Monachum paribus rythmis laudem quæfivisse.” (*Ibid. Lib. 57. Cap. 11.*)

The following, as a unique, is given from Barthius, who ushers it in with this reflexion: “ Non quidem ego animatus sum in id corpus eos poetas deducere, qui barbarè ad minorum gentium linguarum morem et legem versus Latinis numeris conceptos infringunt in rythmos, ut sunt, Bernhardus Morlanensis, quem vel principem talium dicas, Goffridus Viterbienfis, Metelli Quirinalia hexametro composita, Petri Blefenfis, Wilerami Abbatis, Wipponis, et mille talia carmina; hoc tamen carmen peculiari mihi genio scriptum videtur, nec indignum cujus extra ordinem ratio habeatur. Est vero de bello Trojano in hæc verba scriptum.”

Pergama flere vo	}	lo
Solo rapta do		
Est Paris absque pa	}	re
Audet tenta		
Vadit et acce	}	dit
Nauta solo re		
Tuta libido ma	}	ris
Civibus igna		
Post raptus Hele	}	na
Mille rates ple		

And so on, through a vast number of these lines. Barthius then adds, “ scriptum hoc carmen est ante annum domini MCC. Inventi vero genus novum est, nec tale quid hætenus prodiisse in publicum puto.”

Sidonius has been reputed the father of the Latin rhimes: but their origin may perhaps be traced to the earlier Christians, who devoted themselves wholly to the service of God. Terentianus, who lived in the first century, when he made the distinction between metre and rhyme, might probably have had an eye to the hymns of the devout, at that period, whose meetings were as regular as the return of the night, which they spent in prayer and psalmody. “ Hymnos, Litanias, omnesque  
“ cantilenas

“cantilenas *rythmicè*, *metricè*, vel *prosaicè*, quas fecerant, authenticavit.”  
(*Ekerhardus, in Vit. Notkeri, Cap. 17.*)

Yet the *Cathemerinon*, or body of hymns, composed by Prudentius, in the fourth century, is not distinguished by any rhyme:\* perhaps that ratio had not then obtained in Spain, who, while other countries were murdering the muse, disdained to be their accomplice. In fact, it is difficult to say, whether the piety or the elegance of this admirable poet more deserve our esteem. Certain, however, it is, that so early as the sixth century, St. Gregory, after the Goths had destroyed whatever of the fine arts remained, collected with great industry, all the ancient hymnal music, which he incorporated for the use of the Roman church, into one grave and dignified Antiphone. At this period, the state of French music was deplorable, being little better than the howlings of wild beasts, particularly in the northern and more remote parts of Gaul, where it resembled the barbarous and ferocious shouts, with which the leaders of her armies animated their soldiers to battle. And, indeed, such then was the state of Gallic music, that in Italy its barbarism was a proverb, *Γαλλικὴ καὶ βαρβαρικὴ Μῦσα προσπαίζει*. Yet before the ninth century, France had learned the value of a civilized music, and adopting the Italian mode, soon became the rival of her neighbour; Charlemagne himself becoming the arbiter in their musical contests. Many of her hymns at this period are composed in rhyme, and, until lately, were performed on festivals in her cathedrals, under their old titles of *triumphes* and *laudes*, being probably some of those, that Notkerus of Saint-Gall, in the tenth century, had consecrated to the service of the church: “*sanctæ ecclesiæ Christi per mundi climata in laudem Dei canonizavit.*” (*Ekerhard. Loc. cit.*) As the state of Italian music improved, the old hymns and Antiphones of St. Gregory were new set; some of which, in their ancient rhymes, are yet sung at Rome, on extraordinary occasions. They need not here be further

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infixed

\* Yet in this very century, viz. anno 386, certain Latin hymns in *rhyme*, had been composed at *Rome*. Of this I am well assured, by the same learned friend I have so often mentioned, who had seen them of that date.

insisted on, except just to express the extreme antiquity of the Latin rhyme; which, from the church found its way to the cloister, and from thence to the multitude, with whom it lost the solemn dignity that piety had attached to it.

I had once intended to pursue this subject, tracing the Latin rhymes through the dark ages, in the respective countries of Italy, France, and England, and of later days, Germany and Belgium. But enough, and perhaps too much has been said on a subject that all acknowledge, and of which few are ignorant. Those, however, who would extend the enquiry, may consult Camden's Remains, Barthius, Paschius, Baillet, &c. &c., all of whom give us various specimens of the barbarous muse in the different ages of monkery.

Of the southern provinces, Italy took the lead both in prose and in poetry: the Roman tongue, indeed, was spoken in all the provinces, but with less purity as remoter from the seat of empire: it was natural therefore for Italy to form her language, if not prior in time, at least pre-eminent in harmony; and to this day the Italian holds its superiority, deservedly admired above the other European tongues. When it was that Italy laid down the Latin for the Italian, has not been precisely ascertained: for like the lights and shades of a good painting, it is not possible to say, where the one begins, or the other ends. We are told however that it continued to be spoken till the time of St. Bernard and the Emperor Barbarossa in the twelfth century; and that afterwards it was wholly dropt in conversation. But Voltaire, who was better qualified to compose a light memoir of events passing before him, than to drudge through musty authors, asserts that the Italian was not formed at the time of Frederic 2d, that is, at the beginning of the thirteenth century. By *formed*, the historian meant, I presume, *perfected*; otherwise the very lines he produces to prove it, contradict the fact. The verses of this Emperor whom he calls *great*, less perhaps for being an Emperor than for being an *Atheist*, are as follow:

“ Plus

" Plas me el Cavalier Frances  
 " E la donna Catalana  
 " E l'ouvrar Genoes  
 " E la danza Trevifana  
 " E lon cantar Provenzales  
 " Las man e cara d'Angles  
 " E lon donzel de Toscana."

These lines, says Voltaire, are the last example of the Romance language, free from the Teutonic asperity: as such, they are here transcribed. He observes further, they are a precious monument of the language at this period, and more valuable, says he, with his usual raillery, than all those ruins of the middle age, so greedily sought after by men of more curiosity than taste. The historian then gives us some provençal rhimes of the year 1100, which for their *jargon*, as he calls it, are here transcribed, as well as for a specimen of the provençal rhime.

" Que non volia maudir ne jura, ne mentir,  
 " N'occir, ne avontrar, ne preure de altrui,  
 " Ne s' avengear deli suo enemí,  
 " Loz difon qu'er Vaudes et los feson morir."

The provençal language, adds the historian, continues the very same now. Its poetry of course, and its rhimes can have suffered but little change. His short observation on the Italian as a language is subjoined, because it is of some authority, and applies to the matter before us. Under the direction of Petrarch, says he, the Italian acquired that force and elegance, which have rather improved than declined. It assumed its present form about the close of the thirteenth century, in the reign of the good King Roger, father to the unfortunate Joan. This is the substance of what he says: but beside Petrarch, the authority of other great men, who at once preceded Petrarch and were his cotemporaries, must have had great influence on the Italian poetry. In the middle of this century we have Brunetti and his pupil Dante; and, contrary to the statement of Voltaire, Petrarch did not flourish till the fourteenth century,

century, at which time Boccacio contributed, if we take the word of no incompetent judge, to illumine and enrich the Italian quite as much as Petrarch himself. This excellent judge thus delivers himself; *Whoever hath not read Boccacio, can have no conception of the extent or energy of the tongue.* (*Vincende della letteratura, del. C. Denina.*) To these may be added the brother historians Villani, in the same century, whose labors sealed the purity of the Italian prose. Petrarch, however, had an unreasonable despair of the Italian, and supposing it would not outlive his century, composed much the greater part of his works in Latin. The latter is nearly forgot, while his Sonnets have immortalized the Italian. This was the Augustan age of Italy, and it were the compliment of a coxcomb to say, with a certain finical writer, that Petrarch was the Waller of his day.

In the investigation of subjects like the present, it may sometimes be necessary to view a question with a philosophic eye, and instead of merely stating a fact, to account for the causes that produced it. Thus the period when France resigned the Latin for her own tongue, being so much earlier than when Italy formed hers, requires a short reflexion. France, it was observed above, had made some successful struggles in *music*, which before the ninth century had considerably altered the ferocity of her manners, and prepared her bards for those notes, that not only distinguished the succeeding age, but produced consequences which the finest phrenzy of the poet's eye could not have foreseen. Full of war and bloodshed as were those times, they yet invited Taste and Learning, in whose train followed Arts and Science, that after the revival of letters, and under the patronage of the great, illuming the darkness that shaded the human mind, led to the happy Reformation that has since been so beneficial to the world. Europe looks back with astonishment, but finds in the eighth and ninth centuries the dawn of her present greatness, when poetry, music, and the arts that polish mankind appeared with unexpected lustre, giving birth to efforts by which the ages that followed have been enriched and adorned: and it might be proved, that the very subject we are now upon is a wheel in the great machine then put in motion. This machine it was reserved  
for

for a Charlemagne to direct; and without going into the history of that extraordinary man, it is sufficient to observe that the dignity and greatness of his mind, had no sooner conceived than it executed the grandest designs, doing more in forty years than any succession of Kings have been able to perform in four hundred. He wisely saw that France could never be a great nation, till she possessed a language of her own, and himself (for who so fit?) composed the first grammar she had witnessed. Her tongue therefore may justly be called *Royal*: indeed it had been the policy of the wisest nation the world ever produced, to plant her language with her standard; and *modern* France has wisely profited by the great example. But the best grammar in the world without good writers to sustain its rules, and good poets to embellish them, for it is poetry that both makes and embalms a language, could of itself perform little: accordingly, we find that great monarch not only erecting churches that were to meliorate the world, and founding public schools for its instruction, but liberally rewarding all who excelled in those arts by which his country could be benefited. Among these the poets and musicians had his chief regard. But this æra produced under its wise King those *merry men* that at first were called, not *poets*, but in the provençal language, *troubadours*, or inventors of stories, mostly of a comic nature, sung to the harp, that always accompanied the feast. So well did this monarch understand the powers of music and poetry, so fond was he of these arts, and so encouraged their cultivation, that we find him in one of his journies over the Alps, met by a Lombard *troubadour* (we should now call them *savoyards*, the degenerated race of minstrels!) whom the King made his guest, suspending for a night his cares in that cold and cheerless region with the rhimes of this itinerant trouvaire. In Provence lay the scene of these sports; and what land could the muses with more propriety have chosen for their residence, than this inspiring country, whose pure and delightful air breathed the very soul of harmony? But the unhappy wars in which France was plunged for two centuries after, gave a severe check to the language formed by Charlemagne, which at first was called *Romanesque*, being an admixture of the Roman and Francic tongues, whence the  
succeeding

succeeding compositions in the new tongue were called *Romance*, a name by which those of a particular cast are still distinguished. In this state stood the language with little improvement, till the eleventh century opened at the Court of Constance,\* a fresh theatre for the display of genius, when these Troubadours new strung their lyres to notes of gallantry and valorous deeds, rehearsing, as the poet says,

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“ High-wrought stories  
 “ Of ladies’ charms, and heroes’ glories.”

The Popes too, whose court was become highly polished and splendid, had made Avignon their residence, where the holy see consecrated these pastimes, well knowing its throne was of this world. And indeed such influence had these sports, that artfully causing the women to become a party in them, combined all the graces of mirthful music and novel poetry, on the ages immediately following, that it was said, Charlemagne, in the division of his dominions, had assigned Provence as a property to the *merry poets* and men of the court, *Homini de corte*. At this period† too, the Arabians had considerably spread themselves in Europe, and so acknowledged was their language, that over the King’s chapel at Palermo, we have an inscription in Latin, Greek, and *Arabic*, setting forth, that in the year 1142, a Time-piece had been made by the order of Roger.‡

Though

\* Surnamed *Blanche*, daughter to William Comte of Provence, on occasion of her nuptials with Robert King of France, in the year 1001.

† The author has never seen Mrs. Dobson’s history of the Troubadours, nor can he now procure it. He may therefore be found to differ from that lady, writing from memory of what he may formerly have read in other authors; a memory not always correct, and sometimes unconnected. It is so many years since he read the Bishops of Avranche and Worcester, on the subject of romance, that he is at a loss to say whether he may not be indebted to one or both of those distinguished authorities for some of the observations he has made. And the celebrated history of the Troubadours by Nostradamus, it is not at this time in his power to command.

‡ Hence it seems, that not only the language and poetry of the Arabians had universally influenced the verse of Europe, but we stand indebted to these ingenious people for our knowledge

Though the Arabians most certainly did not teach the Troubadours to rhyme, notwithstanding Fauchet and Le Clerc suppose they did, their poetry must have deeply colored the provençal verse, enflamed as it was with the wildest ardor and enthusiasm. Despicably then as some may judge of *rhime*, these *Rhimers* and *Merry Men* all will be found the real fathers of chivalry and crusade, that were nursed in their songs, and impassioned the age with that romantic love of glory, which still gives a complexion to the politics and manners of Europe. Then it was, that under these *Rhimers*, and their patrons the *Homini de corte*, the poetry of France and Italy, for that of Spain had a very different cause, first assumed a regular form in all the graces and decoration of numbers, that fancy could invent, or care employ, or rhyme and harmony recommend; laying the foundation of the various poetry, which these kingdoms afterward produced, whether heroic or dramatic, satyric or amatory, allegoric or sublime. This rhiming entertainment continued at the courts of the great, under the different appellations of *Chançons* and *Tençons*, for upwards of 200 years after the time of Robert and Constance, not only advancing Italian and Gallic poetry to a rapid pitch of improvement, but considerably influencing that of Europe in general, especially that of England, which scarcely yet had begun to dawn; but whose meridian afterward blazed out in a splendor and magnificence surpassing the most brilliant æra of her neighbours. Here we will leave the French poetry, of which some little had been said before, though more perhaps may occur in another place.

From France, and her own immediate translations from the Norman, the English took the turn of their poetry, and shaped their versification:

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for

knowledge of the *Time-piece*, whose invention has been ascribed to a so much later date: and we read also, that after the time of Roger, the Sultan of Ægypt made a present of another Time-piece to the Emperor Frederic II, which not only shewed the hours of the day and night, but with them the motions of the Sun, Moon, and other planets. Thus in two different parts of the world, we have an ORRERY five hundred years earlier than its reputed invention.

for nothing so much contributes to change the form of a language as *translation*, which necessarily carries with it many of the idioms and modes of phrase peculiar to its original; and whose multiplied transfusions must in the end destroy the character of any tongue. But the poetry of England appeared to little advantage till about the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the language, then almost wholly Saxon, but now incorporating with the Norman, first began to strike root. For, as the civil wars of France, and other troubles, had for a long time impeded the advancement of the French language; the expulsion by the Saxons of the old Britons to a corner of the island, followed by the barbarous invasion of the Danes, and afterward of the Normans, suspended the progression of English poetry, in a degree that can hardly be conceived. Such indeed had been the miserable state of English verse, if that may be called *verse*, whose scansion at once defies and shocks the ear, that for several centuries the language itself cannot be said to have had existence, at least for any literary purpose. In vain therefore shall we seek for the rhyme, where there was almost no verse at all. Add to this, the *early* Saxons did not rhyme what little poetry they had, the inflected cast of their language, like that of Greece and of Rome, not favoring the corresponding close. But when its involutions had unfolded themselves into a more simple and settled order, *then* we see their poetry embrace the rhyme. So that its absence in the *early* Saxon verse proves only, that the structure of their poetry at *that* period resisted it: but, the impediment removed, that their verse fell naturally into rhyme. Contrary therefore to a great authority,\* the Saxons did not “imitate” their neighbours, but yielded as of necessity to the final harmony, imposed by the temperate order of their verse. Still however, the English verse, like the imbued vessel, retains a strong tincture of the Saxon transpositive, and while it receives the rhyme, abounds in more inversions than any other of the polished European tongues.

To

\* Doctor Samuel Johnson.

To return. The first romances, like the first histories of the world, delivered in rythm to fix the morals and strengthen the polity of savage man, were composed in metre, impressed with the *rhime*, and sung at festivals to the harp; like the odes and hymns of the Grecian bards, or the songs and melodies of the Hebrews for the service of the Temple. After this manner the original romances of all Europe were composed and sung; and from what observations I have been able to make, it does not appear that any one nation borrowed the custom of the other; which induces a strong supposition that the minstrel part of the ceremony had an higher origin than the fashion of the day; and that probably the Celts had given it birth. For all nations appear to have sung their poetry to the Harp, nor was their union separated in Greece till about the time of Aristotle. (See his *Polit. L. 8. c. 5.*) From this period however the rhyme seems to have become a necessary appendage to European verse; and indeed the genius of the French poetry had now taken that turn, which did not admit of *prose mesurée*, as they very properly call *blank-verse*; and surely no language was ever less adapted to it! He that is curious to trace the progress of the French rhyme, may consult Messrs. Fauchet, Baillet, and De La Rue, of whose work Mr. Ellis has very properly availed himself; and whose enquiries to pursue in this place would be only a repetition of what that gentleman has so ingeniously written.

Yet something must be observed on that source, from which the French are said to have derived their rhyme.

Mr. Ellis quotes Fauchet, for saying that his countrymen claim the honor of its application to their poetry from the Monk Otfrid, A. 870: but, says Mr. Ellis, succeeding antiquarians have ascribed its invention to the Latin rhimes of the sixth century. As the argument of these gentlemen applies equally to the rhimes of Italy and Spain, our own rhimes, and those of polished Europe in general, the same answer will serve them all.

I do not think it material to the present question, when it was that the monks began to torture the Latin tongue, or first twisted its inflexions into rhyme: neither is it worth the enquiry; for with great deference to

Mr. Ellis, for whose observations on ancient poetry the learned world is much obliged, I would say, that had the monk of Weiffemburg never been born, nor a single Latin rhyme disgraced the sixth or any other century, every nation in Europe would have rhimed its poetry in the very same manner it now does. Not considering the genius of language, or the facility with which the poetry of some nations more than of others receives the rhyme, we are seeking for its cause where it cannot be found, and without examining the question, assume that for a truth, which a little reflexion would have told us could have no foundation. Thus ignorance having first peevishly asserted that rhyme was a monkish invention, because the Italian monks had brought it into contempt by their tasteless and barbarous jingles, a dark and credulous age embraced it on trust, as firmly acquiescing in it as in the masses of the monks themselves. Neither time, nor the illuminations of learning have yet dispelled the error; the deception continues, and the veil yet remains to be removed.

“ But,” says Mr. Ellis, “ this date, (viz. the 6th century,) is certainly anterior to any that can be assigned to the *Runic* ode, called “ *Elgil’s Ransom*, that has been translated by Dr. Percy, and affords “ perhaps the earliest specimen of rhyme in any MODERN language.” The precise date of the *Runic* ode I do not pretend to know; but the Armoric or ancient British continues yet to be spoken, and with great purity, by an whole people, and is therefore *modern*: yet the rhimes of *Thalieffin* are more ancient by a century than those of the Latin monks, while those of *Aneurin* are at least of equal antiquity,\* and consequently each of them “ anterior” to any date that hath been assigned to the *Runic* ode. The Irish likewise is a *modern* language, and perhaps both more generally, and more accurately spoken than the Armoric; yet we have a fragment of *Ullen*, a poet far more ancient than *Thalieffin* himself,  
in

\* See Appendix, No. 4.

in which the rhyme is plainly visible. And this, surely, while it proves the wide universality of rhyme, will take precedence of the Runic ode, unless the *Ransom of Elgill* shall be "anterior" to the age of Caracalla.

The fortunes of Spain took a turn very different from those of Italy and France; for, notwithstanding the arms of Rome had spread the Latin language over this province, it was received there with great reluctance, and entirely rejected by the lower people, who adhered to their primitive tongue and ancient poetry. The Cantabrians or Biscayans had made a long and glorious struggle for their liberty: and if it required the Roman legions, with Augustus at their head, to subdue their arms, what human strength could subdue their language? Accordingly we find the old Basque or Celtic to prevail at the present day, rude as the mountains that guard it, and sacred for the antiquity of its poetry. The Phœnicians indeed being the first that civilized Spain, their language became general, and all orders adopted the oriental poetry. But while the Roman yoke was reluctantly borne, their predilection for the old rhymes of the country, rendered the Latin still more intolerable: insomuch, that no sooner had the western empire declined, and the Visigoths possessed the kingdom, than we find the Latin despised and neglected by this impatient people; for though necessity obliged them to retain many Latin words, they yet returned to their old tongue, which in fact they had never wholly quitted. And in the year 570, when the Romans were totally expelled, the political Leuvigildus loses not a moment to reduce the influence of the Roman poetry, by reinstating the Asiatic and African in all their original forms.

The people of Spain were naturally grave and solemn; and the Romans being now expelled, leisure and contemplation gave every man, who was not engaged in arms, an opportunity of cultivating the muses, in whose harmony they soon excelled: and, in less than two centuries and an half, the settlement of the Moors in this country, instead of destroying the national verse, rather improved it in those forms and graces that are the true ornaments of poetry. What Leuvigildus and  
his

his successors could not entirely accomplish, was now performed by these ingenious people, who before the end of the eleventh century entirely broke the language of the Latin, and established the Arabic and other Eastern modes of verse, with stated and regular rhimes, which the Spanish poetry yet retains; the 2d and 4th line of every stanza uniformly ending in a double rhyme, with rarely the intervention of a monosyllable.

The numerous colleges founded by the Moors in this country, contributed much to preserve that taste and harmony they had introduced: and if the Spaniards at any time rhimed the Latin, as the drones of Italy and France and our own dreamers had done, what they performed was in *contempt* of the Latin, with a view through the influence of the rhyme to disengage their poetry from the Roman feet. When therefore it was said above, that Spain did not become an accomplice in the murder of the muse, the expression was not incorrect. Yet when they *did* rhyme the Latin verse, such rhyme was principally confined to their hymns, which being in Latin for the service of the church, and the Roman quantities giving offence, they as of necessity introduced into them a ratio of their own. This, it is apprehended, will suffice for a brief outline of the origin and growth of Spanish rhyme.

After what has been said on the general subject of English poetry, it is presumed there will be little necessity of going into a long deduction of its rhyme, especially as all that can be said on the subject of its verse may be found in Mr. Wharton and other labourers in this quarter of Parnassus. Enough has been already stated to shew the general sterility and uncouthness of the language, especially of its poetry and versification, prior to the thirteenth century, when our poetry first began to assume a form, under Robert of Glocester, who figures in more than 13,000 rhimes! I shall pass by Pierce Ploughman, who wrote about the middle of the fourteenth century, and excelled in the *συγγραμμα*, or alliteration, which may be called the rhyme *inceptive*, and of which it were endless to produce instances: every language favors it, and none I should suppose more adapted to it than another. For the like reason I shall also pass by Gower, and his "Confession of a Lover," with his *Eches*, and *Londes*, and *Maies*; likewise his disciple Chaucer, with his *Ayens* and *Befmotrids*, abundance  
of

of which sort of phrase may be found in all the writers of that age, by those who are curious after this sort of learning. From them and the intermediate improvers of our poetry, which may be traced at large in the ancient songs and ballads collected by several ingenious hands, I shall pass on to our Spencer, who continued the ancient stanza with its rhimes, and the allegories that grew out of the provençal songs. The muse of Shakespeare seems to have struck out a new mode of versifying for herself, sustained more by the vigour of superior genius than by any innate strength *at that time* in the language; though it must be confessed that the two Earls of Howard, in the time of the last Henry, had done much to give a masculine turn to our poetry, while they smoothed its asperities, and gave it a large portion of that music and harmony it now enjoys.

After Shakespeare, Milton “broke the bondage,” as he calls it. But it should be observed, that to attain his object, the British Homer found it necessary to invert the order of the language, by causing his Muse to speak a new dialect. Neither should it be forgotten, that our poetic language had not at that time assumed the regulated form that Waller discovered to be its true genius, that Dryden confirmed, and the immortal Pope has harmonized with a grace and a music that have not yet been equalled, and probably will never be surpassed. When I read Milton, I do not feel at ease, for I am not reading my native tongue: it is Greek, it is Latin, it is both, it is all three, Greek, Latin and English heaped together, like the mountains of his own devils. Like the earth he describes, his poem sustains itself by its own ponderosity: resembling the clock of some ancient and venerable abbey, whose chimes have been silenced; but whose vast and complicate machinery, *ponderibus librata suis*, performs all its movements in exact time. The dignity of his subject, aided by the vastness of his genius and learning, alone enabled him to support a flight, that had broken the heart of an inferior poet. Of this we have a striking proof in the miserable Miltonics of Addison, whose muse, however, sported gracefully enough in the rhyme that was natural to her. If aught could have inspired him *out of rhyme*, he had surely kindled his torch at a sublime passage in the Roman bard, which himself had selected, as the touchstone of his

his own Miltonic powers. He entitles it, "Milton's style imitated in a translation of a story out of the third *Æneid*."

" 'Tis said, that thunder-struck Enceladus  
 " Groveling beneath th' incumbent mountain's weight,  
 " Lies stretch'd supine, th' eternal prey of flames.——"

*Obe jam fatis!* But we have another proof in the *Splendid Shilling*, whose Miltonics, as the author had intended, become downright burlesque when applied to familiar subjects. Philips brought it to the test, and shewed in the happiest manner that the Greek and Roman phrase employed by Milton, was nor designed by that bard for others to imitate: but rather as a succedaneum for the rhyme he disdained and had studiously rejected. Yet such is the nature of the British muse, that it is with difficulty even the great Milton himself, with all his elaborate Hellenisms and Latinisms, sometimes escapes the rhyme, which at every turn obtrudes itself on him. And to avoid a word that both taste and convenience had offered to him, this very champion of blank-verse, this *Hercules Musarum* has more than once found himself compelled to adopt another word less beautiful and expressive; a proof that the great adversary of rhyme felt his trammels more difficult than those he had gloried to burst: like the honest Irishman, who, having fallen in love with his jailor's daughter, that had assisted his flight, exclaimed, "By my conscience I was never more a prisoner than now my *feet* are at liberty." When to such a man, even in his own laboured construction of a language whose very turn, one would think, extruded the rhyme, it was difficult to eschew the correspondent sound, let minor poets, beware how they attempt the bow of Ulysses, and abandon that easy grace now embodied into English poetry. And while tragedy from custom, as well as from the loftiness of her tone, and the very nature of dialogue, is allowed to reject the rhyme; I trust we shall never again, till another Milton shall arise, see an English poem in *prose mesurée*.

I have

I have said above, that the æra of Dante and Petrarch was the Augustan age of Italy. Others, perhaps, may have formed a different opinion, nor shall I now contest the point. What I principally meant was, that Dante and Petrarch had unlocked the springs of Italian poetry, and certainly have not been outdone by any of their successors. Crescimbeni too had said, that such was the excellence of Petrarch's verse, that reaching the highest point of perfection, the Tuscan poetry, after the manner of all sublunary things, speedily sunk once more into its ancient rudeness. And so true is this, that for a whole century after, the Italian poetry stood still, as if in astonishment of the efforts itself had made. Nor was it till Lorenzo of Medici, about the middle of the fifteenth century, had recalled the muses to their ancient groves, that they again appeared in Italy. After these, a second but shorter calm succeeded, when Ariosto and Tasso burst upon the world, with Costanzo, Tansillo, Guarini, and some few others in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who have fixed the Italian poetry as on a rock that cannot be shaken, but with the destruction of the language itself. But all these distinguished bards composed their best and noblest works in the teleutic harmony: neither would they have committed the brazen monuments of their own and their country's fame to the precarious tenure of a rhyme, had they not been sufficiently convinced of its importance; and that, whatever might have been the stubborn and inflexible feature of the Roman Verse, the genius of the Italian muse, from whose ashes she sprung, spoke in rhyme, and like another phoenix, from burning in the balms of the parent nest, took a bolder flight, and adopted a sweeter music of her own. And although England for the most part shaped both the language and the form of her poetry after the fashion of France, as she has followed her in almost every other, yet was it at the Italian fire that Spenser lighted his allegoric lamp, and the sublime Milton kindled the torch, that animating the frame of the universe, blazed on the confines of futurity, and flaming into another world, "far round illumined hell." To Dante

therefore, the severe, the nervous, inventive Dante, and the more polished Petrarch, with their graceful and copious brother, Boccaccio, belongs the honour of Italian poetry. These were the fathers and founders of its verse, the venerable Homers of their country, whose self-illuminated constellation rose upon the world, and though eclipsed for a time, as the sun itself shall be quenched and darkened, lighted Italy to the sacred fountain, of whose waters the rest of Europe has so largely drank. Yet these immortal men, so far from disdaining the rhyme, found in it the legitimate harmony of verse, that harmony whose music has since captivated all Europe, and will continue to charm the ear of poetry to the end of the world, with which it is coeval, and out of which it sprang. If Ariosto, therefore, has dressed out a rhymeless comedy,\* or Milton an heroic poem in a dialect till then unknown, it proves nothing against the general argument; rather shewing that a poem *may* be sustained without rhyme, than that it *should*.

We are now arrived at *Germany*; and on such a dry soil, what staff can support our uneasy steps? Taubmannus referring to *Tacit. de mor. Germ. cap. 11.* shews that several hundred years before the time of Otho, a vast number of German poets had existed, who composed their verses in *rhime*, after the manner of the Celts, “*Qui ferè rhythmicam poesim induebant.*” And Paschius, alluding to Otho, “*Quin longe antiquiora artis vestigia apparent. Apud Celtos (quo nomine appellari omnes populi qui Germaniam et Galliam occuparunt, a quibus ipsi quoque Galli suam originem trahunt) celebrantur olim bardi, unde antiquum vocabulum, Bar, ortum, quod cantilenam significavit.*”

Of Carolus Magnus, who, like Otho, had been the reputed founder of the Celtic poetry, because he had extended certain new privileges to the order of bards, Taubmannus says humorously, “*quem quidem Teu-*  
“ *tonicæ*

\* See Appendix, No. 2.

“ tonicæ scripturæ (rythmicæ pocscos) autorem faciunt, eâdem fide poterant et Alexandrum Magnum Græcè, et Julium Cæsarem Latine nobis architectari.”

Beside the rhimes of Otfrid, of which something has already been said, this bard's translation of the gospels in Teutonic rhimes is yet preserved in the monastery of St. Amand. Its antiquity, I apprehend, is its best recommendation, notwithstanding the pompousness of its title, “ *Otfredi Evangeliorum liber : Veterum Germanorum grammaticæ pocscos, Theologiæ præclarum monumentum.*”

We have likewise a monk of this order flourishing about the same period, in an *Επινίκιον*, or triumphal ode, the original of whose good old Teutonic rhimes is still to be seen in that monastery.

“ Sunt qui,” says Paschius, “ vel *ab initio* versuum, vel *ab initio et fine simul*, vel denique *in medio eorum* rythmis accumulandis operam navant, quam ultimam rationem inire *Zefio* præ ceteris visum est.” Thus, it seems, this German excelled in the *accumulated* rhyme, carrying that species of harmony to an extent which none of his countrymen had done.

Like their neighbours, the Germans had also their *macaronic* poetry, originally broached by the Italians, who borrowed it of Lucretius,

“ Nigra *μελιχροος* est.” &c. *Lucret. L. 4.*

But from what I have seen of the German Macaronic, such antiquated rudeness as this,

“ Gens sine capite mag *feinen Rath* geschaffen,  
“ Imperium vacat capite, *so hant fein hoht die Psaffen,*”

could give little pleasure to the academy. I shall therefore hasten to

The Belgic poetry ; on which I shall be as short as possible. Paschius shews that the Belgians being a branch of the same tree with the Germans,

derive like them, their poetry from the Celts; and yet it does not seem to have taken an early form, for in the year 1670, James Doufa is the first who composed the Belgian alexandrine, which is in rhyme, and may be found in Paschius: after him comes B. Dn. Major, in a Latin poem out of all metre;

“ Sperlingi, Panfophe, Theologe facunde,  
“ Musæum ambulans, dic mihi unde,” &c. &c.

About this period we have also Riparius, who has the honor of being the inventor of another species of Latin verse, in strophes, with intercalary rhimes, all ending alike. Plempius, another Belgian, in the year 1639, published his “*Quisquilæ Poeticæ*,” in which he rhimes away in as bad Latin as any monk of them all. He has the merit of inventing another sort of Macaronic, or a Belgico-Latino-Latino-Belgico verse, the words in each language bearing the same import; a specimen, it is presumed, is unnecessary. Yet although as said above, the Belgic poetry had not taken an early root, we have in the ninth century, Hubald, a monk of this order, (the order seems to have been more devoted to the rhyme than their rituals,) composing a poem in praise of *baldness*, and address to Carolus Calvus, the first line of which begins thus,

“ *Carmina Clarifonæ Calvis Cantate Camænæ.*”

This reminds us of Placentius’s pig-poem, mentioned by Vossius, in his history of the Latin poets, cap. 3.; where every word began with a P, but which Sandius, in his *Animadversions*, declares to have been impossible. Hubald, however, has proved the possibility of such alliterative rhyme. And had this been wanting, we have Hader the Dane’s “*Canum cum catis certamen*,” which may be construed in his own way,  
“ The

“ The Contest of the cats and curs ;” every word of which begins with the letter C. It may be found in the work called “ *Deliciæ Poetarum Danorum.*” Tom. ii. p. 369. The invocation opens in this manner.

“ *Cattorum Caninus Certamina Clara Canunisque,*  
“ *Calliope, Concede Chelyn !*”

The poem consists of ninety-three verses, all in this style. Heaven preserve us from going through the alphabet ! But enough has been said of the Belgic poetry, that like the German, of which it is a dialect, bears also the impress of the old Celtic or Teutonic, and like that, is constantly marked with the rhyme, unless perhaps where it has studiously, and sometimes even for the sake of novelty, been avoided.

And now, from the general view of the question, the following conclusions may be drawn.

That the population of the world began in the East.

That in whatever manner the dispersion of mankind, and the origin of diverse languages, at what is called the confusion of tongues, took place, it is evident that they began from the East, and thence were spread over the habitable globe.

That the first empires, states, and governments were also in the East, and Asia and Africa peopled from thence, spreading over Chaldea, India, Persia, Arabia, Egypt, Tartary, China, and from thence diverging into Europe.

That each successive people, at their first migration from the parent source, used the language in which they were capable to converse.

That

That each language had great affinity with the other; and in proportion as they advanced in refinement, that their poetry was decorated with the rhyme, or correspondent found.

That the descendants of each people *still* use the rhyme in the structure of their poetry, as they originally had done.

That the first colonization of European Greece was from Egypt.

That under whatever names their leaders were called, their language was Egyptian, and adopted the rythmus to which it was congenial.

That the Greeks, and afterward the Romans were the only people, who, by adding quantity and feet, pretended a melioration of their verse, by abstruding the rhyme, which all the other nations of the earth had found so natural to language.

That when the Greek and Roman states lost the power of conquerors, by which alone their languages were either extended or sustained, the different tongues into which the Greek and Latin were split, each as soon as formed, resumed the rhyme, that had been continued by general use.

That although the language of Greece and Rome for some centuries denied the rhyme, by adopting quantity, yet no sooner did invading nations destroy that custom, than a return to the ancient rhyme, in their several poetries became universal, and remains in that pristine state.

That, as poetry was primarily introduced in honour of the religion of the country, no sooner was it restored, than the Greek and Latin languages

languages also had their rhimes in the service of the Christian Church, a mode that continues in practice, as well in the hymns of the Greek as those of the Roman and other churches. And, in fine,

That from the first ages, rhyme ever was, and now is, and ever will be.

THE UNIVERSAL VOICE OF NATIONS.

APPENDIX.

# APPENDIX.



## NUMBER I.

ONE of these learned doctors shall himself decide the point. “Quod ad veros horum versuum numeros, ad rythmum et modulationem attinet, id omne et penitus ignotum est, et nullâ unquam arte aut industriâ humanâ investigari potest.” “Manifestum est antiquam et veram Hebraica pronuntiandi rationem omnino esse ignotam.” And again more particularly, “De versuum singulorum numeris nihil certò definiri potest.” “Profecto qui metricam Hebræam veram illam et genuinam instaurare conatur, is ædificium extruit, cui fundamentum in quo nitatur planè deest.” Præl. 3d. “Quamquam Hieronymus de metris Hebraicis multa disputat, multa de tetrametris et hexametris, de iambicis et sapphicis memorat, ea tamen omnia nimium urgenda esse res ipsa ostendit; etenim planè pingui, quod aiunt, Minerva agit, in Hebraicis remotam quandam similitudinem Græcorum metrorum quærens.” (Præl. 18.)

Here, then, the learned Doctor asserts as *Professor*, that which, as author of the *Confutatio*, he denies; for it requires no long argument to prove, that if in the Hebrew poetry *semper habetur ratio*, it is impossible that such ratio should be *penitus et omnino ignota*. These instances, however, selected out of fifty others, will suffice to prove, that whatever might have been the genius or structure of the Hebrew verse;

whatever might have been its rythmal character; in whatever might have consisted its Dithyrambic thunder, or its *terrible graces*, the *δυναμις* of its poetry, I was warranted in saying, that Apollo and his nine harmonious maids had no acquaintance with it. “*Fatendum erit, non modò Hebræorum carmina nihil reliqui habere, sed nihil unquam habuisse, harmoniæ ac poeticæ suavitatis.*” Præl. 3. Like the coruscations from a cloud by night, the flashes of their poetry just illumine the obscurity that surrounds us, leaving us again in the darkness we had been in before. Yet with all its obscurities and all its uncouthness, it is not wonderful that the hymnal poetry of the Hebrews should lift itself above the grandeur of the Greek or loftiness of the Roman ode; or that thunders and lightnings should accompany its enthusiasm. With the Hebrews, as with all other nations, the hymn indisputably was the form of their first compositions; and of this we have a beautiful proof in the Eucharistic ode of Moses, beyond all question the most ancient piece of poetry in the world. But the gods of other nations being local, the strains and raptures of their poets were as limited as the objects of their adoration; while the omnipotence and wisdom and goodness of an eternal and universal creator, filled with unbounded sublimity the hymns of the Hebrew bards, who felt his protecting power, and acknowledged his beneficence. Nor were the Hebrews themselves insensible to this distinction, or to the advantage they enjoyed: one of the sublimest of their poets says, “*As for the gods of the heathen, they are but idols, but it is the Lord that made the heavens.*” And again, “*Among the Gods there is none like thee!*” The theme kindles him, and he feels his superiority arising from the very nature of his subject. Yet, while I agree with Lowth, that the similitude between the structure of the Hebrew and the Greek verse is remote indeed, I cannot help thinking the odes of Pindar yield to those of the inspired writers in nothing but the inferiority of their subjects, whose nature and condition did not allow a wider range of fancy, or a more glowing enthusiasm. And we are likewise to take into the account *our own interested feelings*, neither the exploits of a horse-race nor the genealogy of a king, being objects of Christian regard. Let us divest ourselves of these *incidental* circumstances, and as  
far

far as Christians can, look at the question without prejudice, allowing something for the distinctive genius of the two languages, and we shall find that the odes of Pindar, in their frame and form, bear a striking resemblance to the hymns of the Hebrew bards, whose long and short, and broken numbers, carry with them all the character of the Theban muse; the same abrupt transitions, the same graceful negligence, the same happy omissions, the same headlong metaphors, the same fury of conception, animate the one and the other with the same enthusiasm of soul. The daring Dithyrambic of the Greek, equalled alone by the Thunder of the Hebrew, sweeps with precipitous arm all nature before it. Methinks I see the bard seated on his throne of gold in the temple of Apollo, pouring like the God himself the torrent of his song, and like him regarded as the genius of the fane. Who will deny, that had the author of the Grecian hymns been an Hebrew celebrating the One Eternal God, he would have kindled the strings of his lyre with the same lofty success, and *inspiration* too, that the royal prophet “awaked *his* lute and harp”? And who is it will say, that had David been doomed to sing the praises of Theron and Hiero, with those of their horse Pherenicus, this highly favoured bard would have transcended the flights or surpassed the music of the Theban swan? In a word, the ideas of the profane bard, through his ignorance of the divine nature, are necessarily restricted to sensible objects, and the sphere in which humanity moves; while the “Prophet of the Most High,” drawing his inspiration from the immediate source of truth, not from the imaginary fountain of the muses, is as necessarily transported into the bosom of the Deity. Let the Grecian bard become the prophet of the Most High, let him celebrate the wonders he had witnessed, and the favours he had found; what then would be his language? Instead of setting forth the Ionian philosophy, with *Ἀείρων μὲν ὕδωρ*, his language would be this, “Thou sendest the springs into the rivers, and the waters rush through the midst of the hills.” Instead of Hiero’s victories, with his horses and his chariots, that raised *him* to a god, we should have this triumphal address to the Father of all victory, “Thou makest the clouds thy chariots, and walkest

upon the wings of the wind :” and instead of “ His glory beams through Peloponnesus,” we should hear him exclaim, “ O Lord, my God, thou art become exceeding glorious ; thou art cloathed with majesty and honour, and deckest thyself with light as with a garment.” It were a delightful task, and an honourable reward, for any man of taste, and at the same time critically skilled in the respective languages, to trace both the particular resemblances, and the respective differences between the Hebrew and Æolian instruments, and oblige the learned world with so noble a work.

#### NUMBER II.

Jodelle first, according to Baillet (*Vie des Poetes*) and after him Baif, made some idle attempts at blank-verse in the French. Passant followed him with equal success ; then Paquier, remembered only for the impotence of his muse. They all flourished about the middle of the sixteenth century, Paquier at the beginning of the seventeenth. Of Baif, Baillet tells this curious story. “ Il ne voulut pas mesme se contenter de faire vers rimez comme les autres, il tacha aussi d’en introduire des mesurez a la mode des anciens Grecs et Romains : et dans le dessein de faire mieux reussir la chose, il avoit etabli dans sa maison de plaisir qu’il avoit à un des Faubourgs de Paris une academie de beaux esprits, et particulièrement de musiciens, pour prendre plus seurement la mesure, les nombres, et la cadence du vers François sans rime.” But he allows some merit to Rapin, who however had been weak enough to try his strength at “ les vers mesurez,” and failed like the rest. In this list we are sorry to see the charming Desportes, whose exquisite taste sustained for a long time, the purity of the French verse, against the barbarisms of Ronfard, who, with great genius, but a perverse judgment, had so debauched the poetry of France, that Boileau wittily said his muse spoke Latin and Greek in French,

“ Sa muse en François parlant Grec et Latin.”

Yet

As sōon | ās sūn | bēams cōuld | pēēp ōūt | oncē frō thē | mōūntains,  
And bȳ thē | dāwn ōf thē | dāy hād | sōmewhāt | lightēd | Olȳmpus,

And this other effort of the third line in Homer's first *Odyssēy*,

Πολλὰν δ' Ἀνθρώπων ἰδὲν ἄστεα, καὶ πόλιν ἑγών.

Qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes.

" All trāvē | lērs dō rē | pōrt grēāt | prāise ōf U | lȳffes,  
For thāt hē | knēw mǎnȳ | mēn's mǎn | nērs, ānd | sāw mǎnȳ | cīties."

This, we are told, is "trew versifying"; Dr. Ascham declaring, "it was not made at the *first* more naturalie in the Greke by Homere, nor afterward turned more aptelie into Latine by Horace, than translated into English *roundlie* by myne old friend Mr. Watson," who, fans doubt, is much obliged to *his* old friend Doctor Ascham for having so carefullie preserved this trewlie deliciouse morselle. But this illegitimate and mongrel sort of verse has not, I believe, been attempted in the European tongues, since the sixteenth century, and I trust will never be revived, notwithstanding the sage admonition of our old friend Horace, "vos exemplaria Græca."

As Figliucci was the first who *recommended* the ancient quantities to modern language, (for it was not altogether so new a conceit, that the Greek and Roman measure was unknown to England in the twelfth century, the *Ormin* having been composed in tetrameter iambics,) so he was the first who *condemned* rhyme as of barbarous invention.\* *Blank-verse*,

\* About twenty or thirty years before Figliucci's Commentaries appeared, viz. anno 1524, Giovanni Rucellai printed at Rome a poem called *Le Api*, "which," says Mr. Roscoe, "will remain a lasting monument that the Italian language requires not the shackles of rhyme to render it harmonious."

*verse*, however, and *Roman quantities* have been improperly confounded; for though Roman quantities are certainly verse without rhyme, yet verse without rhyme is not therefore Roman quantities. Even the learned Pafchius does not discriminate them, but puts the quotation given above, from the translation of Heliodorus, on the same footing with the measure of the *Paradise Lost*, merely because the rhimes in both had been omitted. In the sixteenth century we have the Lord Henry Howard discarding the rhyme, and translating the fourth book of the *Ensis* into English hexameters, as in the same century, we have Cardinal Ippolito translating its second book into Italian hexameters, which he entitles, in the true spirit of the times, *Il Cavaliero Errante*; to these may be joined Stiernhelmius the Swede, who writes the Gothic history in Swedish words with Roman quantities. These, I believe, are among the first attempts in Europe at blank verse, if we except a vain effort of Ariosto, who wrote comedies *out* of rhyme; as our own Ariosto, Mr. Hayley, wrote comedies *in* rhyme: with *novelty* for their motive, and possessing similar genius, their success has been the same.

The French verse, in its texture and turn, strongly resembles the cast and character of the Hebrew, for which excellence it is principally indebted to the chaste and polished Marot, author of the French rondeau,\* and father of the masculine and feminine rhimes, that give such

“ Ed odi quel che sopra un verde prato  
 “ Cinto d’abeti e d’onorati allori,  
 “ Che bagna or un muscoso e chiaro fonte,  
 “ Canta de l’api del suo florid’ orto.”

These lines, it is confessed, are very beautiful, and I must not dissent from so exquisite a judge as Mr. Roscoe: nevertheless they only prove, that *Le Api* has perhaps been composed with some degree of success; but that Rucellai thought *one* trial of the sort quite sufficient. See Appendix, No. 5.

\* Dr. Percy has given us a Rondeau of Chaucer, which, says the learned Bishop, the bard had picked up among his neighbours. I believe it was a stranger to the French

such spirit and variety to the French numbers, and are now incorporated into its poetry. Had the bloated Ronfard trod in the steps of this accomplished writer, and we find La Bruyere and others of that day, sharply reproving him for not imitating his simplicity, the French poetry would have owed him more obligations: for the author of "*La Printemps a la sœur d'Astrée*," had a rich and copious fancy, and when he chose to lay aside his "*Estes-vous pas ma seule Entéléchie?*" and speak mortal language, could be as courtly and perspicuous as he was tumid and perverse. But of the services that Marot had rendered her poetry, France is truly sensible: and I much question, had he not given that early turn to her language, which in a manner fixed the laws of her poetry, whether Fontaine or Voltaire, with all their wit, and all their ease, could have so easily sustained the naiveté of the French Muse: sure I am, but for Marot, they had not left behind them such admirable monuments of noble simplicity. The couplets of Marot in the French rhyme, present to me a beauty not unlike the eyes of a fine woman, whose beams, emanating from a double source, end in one point of lustre. This is but a faint sketch of French poetry, and still less of the Italian or the English: but, though cast into the back page, perhaps not wholly un-  
useful to the elucidation of our subject.

#### NUMBER

French language, till Marot gave it birth; and if he did not introduce it, he certainly improved and fixed its laws. The rondeau consists of thirteen verses, as the sonnet does of fourteen; eight of the rhymes must correspond in sound, and be set out in their allotted places: the remaining five rhymes, having likewise the same echoes, must have also their allotted places. It has two burthens, the first placed after the eighth verse, and the last concluding the piece. In addition to this, it is indispensably necessary there should be a rest or pause on the sixth verse. I speak only of the *French Rondeau*; thus, then, the principal beauty and excellence of the rondeau lie in the rhyme and its happy disposition. I say nothing of the *Triplet*, which is only another species of the rondeau, somewhat varied in the situation of its rhymes. This had formed a part of the earlier French poetry, but not Marot himself has been able to give currency to the fettered rondeau.

## NUMBER III.

The Σκολιον was a sentence or maxim delivered and sung at their entertainments; for which reason they were sometimes called Αδομινα, and were generally the sayings of the wise men put into verse, that became a sort of proverbs or gnomes, βιωφίλη. See *Athen. Deip. L. 15. c. 14* and *Casaub. animadv. in Athen.* Of this sort is the well-known Scolion entitled Αδμητι λογον, from its initial words, but happily amended by Dr. Bently, into Χαρωνδυ νομον: a gnome, πικρὴ κακομιλιας. Thus,

“ Χαρωνδυ νομον, ὡ ’ταιρε, μαθων τες Αγαθες φιλει,  
“ Των Δειλων δ’ απεχε, γινες Δειλων ολιγη χαρις.”\*

This Scolion was deemed so excellent that its author has been much contested, some ascribing it to Alcæus, some to Sappho, and some to Praxilla, to whom Eustathius, *Il. β. p. 326. Edit. Rom.* on the authority of Pausanias the lexicographer, has allotted it. It may be thus translated.

“ Taught by Charondas’ laws, the Brave respect;  
“ But shun the Vile; the Vile no grace reflect.”

Sometimes they relaxed this didactic mode, and by an inviting sentiment, gave it the more familiar air of a *catch*. As a proverb of our own seems to have had its origin in the following, we select it for an example.

“ Σὺν μοι πινε, συνηβα, συνηρα, συνηφασιφωρει,  
“ Σὺν μοι μαινομενω μαινεο, συνηφρησιν σωφροσι.”

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M

“ Drink,

\* The morality of this maxim is enforced in the sacred page,

“ Evil communication (κακομιλια) corrupts good manners.”

" Drink, live, and love, and bind thy brows with me :  
 " With me make merry ; I'll be wife with thee."

The original is " be *mad* with me," but that was a fort of Græcian idiom for the full indulgence of the genial hour. After the manner of Anacreon, it is thus paraphrased by my son.

## I.

With me the social goblet share,  
 With me enjoy the youthful hours,  
 With me carefs the frolic Fair,  
 With me compose the wreath of flowers.

## 2.

Now drive with me dull thought away,  
 With me defiance bid to sorrow,  
 Be merry thou with me to day,  
 And I'll be wife with thee to-morrow.

## NUMBER IV.

The great object of the Saxons being the extermination of the Britons, together with their language, we must not be astonished there should remain so few monuments of British poetry. The high reputation of Thalieffin, *Britannicorum bardorum princeps*, could not save him from the general wreck, but rather marked out his songs for destruction ; and most probably he may be placed among those whom the Saxons drove into the mountains on their first coming over. The bards too, whose poetry being calculated either to prompt their countrymen to instant vengeance, or to keep alive the memory of their sufferings, would be the first object of the jealous invader. This very policy, it is thought, determined our own Edward, in less ferocious times, to attempt

tempt the destruction of the order; yet the tyrant failed, their music, like that of Orpheus, proving too powerful for Pluto. For, so low down as the year 1593, we have a commission issued by Elizabeth, to the magistrates of North Wales, directing them to regulate certain abuses that had crept into the profession; a proof that the minstrel order existed in Wales, to the latter end of the sixteenth century. If I do not mistake, we have a statute, in the time of Charles the First, that controuls the itinerant minstrels of Ireland, whose profession, as an order, could not, for the same reason, have been extinct *at that time*. Of Thalieffin, however, there does not, I believe, exist any fragment, except such as Gildas, who may be stiled his cotemporary, might have snatched from the grave: and we are indebted to the indefatigable Usher, who has brought to light out of this author, five original lines of our poet, in the old British character.

“ Gwae yntwy yr ynvidion, pan vy waith Baddon  
 “ Arthur been haelion y lasneu by gochion  
 “ Gwneeth ar y alon givaith gwyr gafynion  
 “ Gonynton gwaedd daredd mach deyrn yrgledd  
 “ Heb drais het droffedd.”

“ Quæ,” (says Usher, *Britann. Eccles. Antiq. c. 5.*) “ in Latinum ser-  
 “ monem traducta ita exhibuit D. Johannes Prifæus.”

“ O miseros illos nimium sub monte Badone  
 “ Quum cruor Arthuri, magnatum principis, ensem  
 “ Inficeret; fusique foret jam sanguinis ultor  
 “ Heroum, quorum auxilio borealia iustæ  
 “ Regna steterè diu——.”

Gildas, says Usher, explains *monte Badone*, “ qui prope Sabrinum  
 “ ostium habetur.” But the lines of our bard are valuable for some-  
 thing more than the *rhime* which adorns them. They prove, that what-  
 ever may be the doubts of some learned men, respecting the existence  
 of Arthur, Thalieffin, in the very moment he is deploring the cala-

mities of his country, whose woes required no fiction, and where truth had best served his purpose, clothes his hero with flesh and blood; and farther, that the Britons were of northern extraction, the truth or the falsehood of the one and of the other standing committed on the same bottom. This single authority is worth a volume of conjectures. Gildas, who quotes our poet, lived at the latter end of the fifth, or beginning of the sixth century; Thalieffin, therefore, must have flourished in the fifth, perhaps about the middle of it. This then traces the rhyme one century higher than the rhymes of the Italian monks in the sixth.

This long note shall be closed by observing, that the Gododyn, in the century after Thalieffin, on the battle of Cattraeth, is composed of 363 stanzas, containing ten or eleven lines each, the rhyme of every stanza being respectively the same, as was the fashion, and is still in use with the Arabians and other eastern nations. But while this is a proof of the antiquity of the rhyme in Europe, it shews also the great facility with which the Welch receives it. Who then shall say that the Britons *borrowed* their rhyme, and that monks gave it birth? When the French, therefore, would seek the origin of their rhyme, they would do well, instead of rummaging the rotten archives of Weiffembourg, to explore the records of *Bretagne*. Mr. Ellis has well observed, that it “ is well known the Welsh soldiers who served in our army at the siege “ of Belisle, (in the year 1756,) found little difficulty in understanding “ the language of the Bretons.” Yet this learned author, whose judgment on other occasions is not apt to fail him, has ascribed to the Latin rhymes of the sixth century, that which Fauchet and other French writers might have found indigenous, or at least as ancient as the 650th year of old Rome, when the Cimbri and Teutones invaded the Roman province, and no doubt brought with them their Cimbrian or Cambrian war-songs. Mr. Ellis has likewise remarked, that “ the Sclavonian sailors, employed on board Venetian ships, in the Russian trade, never fail to recognise a kindred dialect, on their arrival at St. Petersburg.” All this goes to prove, that the rhyme is not *borrowed*: and Russia

now

now rhimes, not after the manner of monks, nor even that of France, or any other polished state; but after the manner of her Slavonian ancestors; that is, after the good old Runic mode. The learned Abbé Fortis, has observed, that the Slavonian language *cannot be doubted* to have existed in Dalmatia, *even from the time of the Roman Republic*; which he proves in an infinity of instances, drawn from the names of cities, rivers, mountains, families, &c. preserved by the Greek and Roman authors, that are manifestly Slavonian: to say nothing of the inscriptions yet existing in Dalmatia, under the first emperors. So that the Russian rhimes, that are but a dialect of the Illyrian, are as ancient in Europe as any perhaps that may be brought against them.

#### NUMBER V.

Since the writing of the note to which this refers, an ingenious friend has favoured me, with a view of "Le Api," a work that I had not seen before. It was composed in the year 1524, and printed at Venice, in 1539. I do not affect much skill in Italian verse, but "Le Api" is, undoubtedly, a very fine poem. The following simile is in Virgil's best manner, and not unworthy of the country which gave birth to that poet.

Come ne la fucina i gran Cyclopi,  
Che fanno le faette horrende a Giove,  
Alcuni con la forcipe a due mani  
Tengono ferma la candente massa;  
E la rivolgon su la falda incude;  
Altri, levando in alto ambe le braccia,  
Battonla a tempo con horribil colpi;  
Altri hor alzando le bovine pelli,  
Et hor premendo, mandan fuori il fiato  
Grave, che stride ne i carboni accesi:  
Parte quando piu bolle, e piu sfavilla,

Frigon

Frigon la massa ne le gelid' onde,  
 Indurando 'l-rigor del ferro acuto;  
 Onde rimbomba il cavernoso monte;  
 E la Sicilia e la Calabria trema.

Nevertheless, this poem has not proved to me, that rhyme is not the genius of the Italian: and, from several incidental circumstances in the poem itself, I am convinced its author found he had undertaken a forbidding and ungracious task. Now, although the poem consists of 1062 lines, only, there appear, on a cursory inspection, not less than 290 verses that terminate in *O*, thus forming considerably more than one fourth of the whole poem in that teleutic. It looks, indeed, as if the subject had invited these harmonies; how else shall we account for this species of *clustered* music, in a poem that professes to take wing, and rise above the correspondent sound?

“ Non temerò cantare i vostri honori,  
 “ Con verso Etrusco da le rime sciolto.”

V. 24.

To use the language of a bard, whose verse has proved that rhyme is the true source of harmony, these terminations *conglome*, as he says of the Hivites that murmur round their queen, and *cohere* in every page of the work, especially at verse 972, where, in the space of only thirteen lines, we have no less than *ten* of these terminative *O*'s; not to insist on the polished (but with us, *vulgar*) rhymes of *imago* and *drago*.

“ Così vedrai multiplicar la *imago*  
 “ Dal concavo reflexo del metallo,  
 “ In guisa tal, che l'ape sembra un *drago*.”

Beside the numerous terminations in the letter *O*, we have, on the same hasty inspection, two hundred verses, out of the remaining 972 that end in *I*, conglobing and clustering after the same bee-like manner.

ner. So that on these two vowels only, we have a swarm of teleutics that buzz through one half of a blank-verse poem! As if the poet had literally intended to *hum* us. Le Clerc, did not find better rhimes in the second psalm, where five out of his seven *ομοιωτικαυτα* end in this very vowel, having the same unvaried return, *Mo*: yet the learned have acknowledged their legitimacy. I admit that the Italians do not denominate these vocal terminations *rhimes*; for that their rhimes have taken a more artificial cast: but this proves nothing, we are speaking of rhyme as it is in *nature*, not in *nations*. National echoes may be as remote from truth, as the execution of the elbow is distant from the simplicity of a Scotch air, or a squeak from the rhyme *masculine*. And what is rhyme but the voice of nature and harmony of repetition? The same which the ancients impersonated and deified under the title *Echo* or *Imago*, that *imaged* the poet's notes, whose sounds she repeated in the very voice and accents of the bard himself. Man, unpolished man, felt himself a part of that universal harmony, and soon learned to imitate what unerring nature had taught him; for of all animals, man is the most imitative. Hence we find the lively and philosophic Greeks appropriating the air of Tempe to the residence of the Muses, where the resounding hills of Parnassus and other mountains, *colles collibus ipsis*, returned the same repeated notes the one to the other, as if nature herself were reverberating her own harmonies. Hence too, we find their writers of pastoral, who followed *nature* in all things, constantly observing that Echo, in responsive sounds imitated the shepherd's music, or that harmony with which nature had inspired her bards. The Romans likewise felt its truth; it did not escape the observation of their great pastoral poet, when he said *respondent omnia sylvæ*, and caused all the groves to echo every syllable, every letter, every *rhime*, for such it is in all its elements, of the most harmonious verse that ever the hand of a master composed.

“Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida sylvas.”

Our

Our own Spencer also, who knew he never spoke with more truth or more propriety, than when he echoed the sentiments of his great originals, arrested the idea, and after them has said,

"The woods shall answer, and their echoes ring."

*Epithal.*

Neither was the music or the philosophy of this verse unacknowledged by the most harmonious and philosophic of all modern poets, who, in his pastoral entitled "Summer," puts the very same line into the mouth of his "shepherds' boy."

Man, I have said, is the most imitative of all animals: this it was, perhaps, that induced the great philosophic poet of Rome to suppose, that his first music was borrowed of the birds, whose notes he imitated, nature and the country inviting him to make the attempt.

"At liquidas avium voces imitauer ore  
"Ante fuit multo, quam lævia carmina cantu,  
"Concelebrare homines possent, aureisque juvare."

*Lucret. Lib. 5. v. 1378.*

I shall not stop to debate the question: but we know, that the first accents of the plummy people, like those of the unfledged poet, composed, as we have seen, of correspondent sounds, are chirped in the same imitated notes. And what is the long-drawn warble of the sweetest of all birds, the Attic songster herself, but the assemblage of the same notes lengthened and multiplied without end? Well therefore, might the poets personify sound, and make a goddess of *her* whom they found to be nothing more than *nature* herself in her most simple but captivating character. How beautifully and piously, has Fabricius, the learned author of "Specimen Arabicum," described this prevailing nature, that harmonises all creation! "Deus Optimus Maximus

imus hunc terrarum orbem, et omnia ab eo contenta certâ ratione quasi metro disposuit, rebusque tam celestibus quam terrenis harmoniam quandam indidit: satis patet cum ipsius *naturæ* primordiis cantum primo exstitisse.” And just after, with an exquisite knowledge of nature: “Videmus omnes aves plurimum, multas totum annum exercere cantillando. Quod si aptis illis inter se, atque mutuo responso sonis æquantibus inæqualitatem suam vis addatur orationis: quid aliud est, quam imago quædam illarum proportionum, quæ folis notæ sunt sapientibus?”\*

But that Echo is the soul of poetry, and *rhime* her proper office, we have Rucellai’s own authority, in the very poem before us. Hear what a poet he has made of Echo! Not content with making her the inventress of the rhime, she must be something more; she must be the genius of the first harmony, in the moment he is asserting the superiority of blank-verse.

VOL. IX.

N

Fuggi

\* Left the reader should suppose that the author indulges an opinion too airy and fanciful, he is requested to read the greater part of the fourth book of Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, where the principle of *Imago* is illustrated in the most beautiful and philosophic manner. Particularly let him read the whole of the verses, from line 529, beginning with “*Principio auditur sonus*,” to line 598, inclusive; *Sound*, he will there find, to receive a corporeal form, and the doctrine here laid down enforced on such principles as Anti-Lucretius himself would not disapprove.

Sex etiam, aut septem loca vidi reddere voces,  
 Unam cum jaceres: ita colles collibus ipsis  
 Verba repulantes iterabant dicta referre.  
 Hæc loca capripedes satyros, nymphasque tenere  
 Finitimos fingunt; —————  
 Chordarumque sonos fieri; dulcisque quærelas,  
 Tibia quas fundit digitis pulsata canentum,  
 Fistula sylvestrem ne cesset fundere musam.  
 —————ut omne  
 Humanum genus est avidum nimis auricularum.

*Lucret. Lib. 4.*

Fuggi le rime, e 'l rimbombar sonoro.  
 Tu fai pur, che l'imagin de la voce,  
 Che risponde de i sassi, ov' Echo alberga,  
 Sempre nimica fu del nostro regno:  
 Non sai tu, ch'ella conversa in pietra,  
 Et fu inventrice de le prime rime?

Nor was this a slip of Rucellai's pen; for so powerfully did he feel the force of her dominion, and the weight of his new caparisons, that he repeats, like echo herself, the very same words, *inventrice de le prime rime*, at the distance of 180 lines, stumbling, at the same time, on an *ομοιοπτώτων* that stood in his way,

"E lieto se n' ando volando al cielo."

*Verse 22.*

But another poet of his own country, one whose taste was not apt to mislead him, has finely touched this subject in his personification of Echo, giving her all the fullness of her proper character. With him she is no longer an image of the voice, but, *per emphasin*, IMAGO THE, IMAGE; she is nature, she is harmony herself, that jocose and sportive goddess, who dwelling in shades and caverns, plays with the language of the bard, and *rings back, recinit*, the last protracted notes of his lyre.

"Quem virum aut heroa lyrâ vel acri  
 Tibiâ, fumes celebrare, Clio?  
 Quem Deum? cujus recinet jocosa  
 Nomen imago?"

*Hor. Lib. 1. Ode 12.*

The result is, that notwithstanding Rucellai glories in the strength and superiority of his *verso sciolto*, yet Echo, in spite of the poet, and as it were in derision of him for having scorned her simple harmonies, mocks his vain attempt, and playing with his own tortured terminations,

tions, ingeminates and multiplies them upon him. For my own part, from what little knowledge I possess of the tongue, I am of opinion, that instead of the Italian resisting the rhyme, there is no European language that courts it so much, or one in which it would be more difficult to avoid it. Rucellai therefore is entitled to praise for having *blanked* one half of his admirable poem.

Rucellai's successful attempt seems to have given birth to other efforts of the sort among the Italians: for not long after, we have the celebrated Annibal Caro translating the *Æneis* into blank-verse, a work in high esteem with his own countrymen, who are the best judges of its merit; though severely censured by Mr. Dryden and Doctor Trappe in their prefaces to their respective translations of the *Æneis*. But whatever Mr. Dryden had done, who was the friend of rhyme, and whom no man excelled in the graceful application of it, Dr. Trappe should have spared his abuse; knowing that himself had transposed the same author, and might be judged by those who were best qualified to pass an impartial sentence.

“ Read the commandments, Trappe: translate no further—

“ Is it not written, Thou shalt do no murder?”

Cotemporary with Caro was Alamanni, who, in the year 1546, published “*La Coltivazione*,” a Georgic, *castrated* of its rhyme. Most, however, of the Italian tragedies are composed in the *verso sciolto*, as if the buskin had asserted her exclusive claim to it: though some of their epic, as of late years, the translation of Milton by Rolli, have been manufactured in this metre. Indeed, as the Italian favours the Roman quantities beyond other European tongues, so it falls with less difficulty than any of them into blank-verse; for, although the Italian invites the rhyme in a superior degree, and notwithstanding its various mixtures of the Gothic, the Greek, the Arabian, and afterwards of the Norman, yet being more immediately founded on the Latin, and arising out of it, it retains a

larger portion of original *blankness* than either the French or the English, that have less of the Latin, and more of the Teutonic character. But we are not therefore to argue from the *possibility* of a thing, to its *propriety*. Were it necessary to insist farther on the vocal rhimes of the Italian poetry, "La Coltivazione", which is written with great ability, would confirm the general truth of these observations.